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THE ART SCHOOLS
OF
MEDIÆVAL CHRISTENDOM.

By A. C. OWEN.

EDITED BY J. RUSKIN, CH. CH., OXFORD,
SLADE PROFESSOR.

LONDON:
MOZLEY & SMITH, 6, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE chapters were written in compliance with the wish of the Editor of the 'Monthly Packet,' to put forth a series of elementary teaching on Art, in its relation to History, for the benefit of the young. Several of the writer's friends, and other persons, having, from time to time, expressed an opinion that the papers would be useful beyond the circle of readers for whom they were originally intended; and Professor Ruskin having, with that ready kindness always experienced by his old pupils and friends, offered to act as Editor, they have been thrown into the present form.

Some of the chapters have been re-written, and the whole carefully revised; and the writer hopes that, thus collected, they may be useful as a handbook to those whose want of time and opportunities preclude them from more extended reading.

The writer does not profess to give, in the Lists attached to each chapter, an entire catalogue of the works in England by the different painters mentioned. It is possible that some of the pictures have changed hands, and that additions and alterations have been made in some of the Galleries. The chief authorities used in drawing up these Lists have been Waagen's 'Treasures of Art in Great Britain,' and Crowe and Cavalcaselle's 'History of Art.' But the writer has not the means at hand by which to correct the Lists, and hopes that any deficiencies on this point will be excused.

A. C. O.

BEAUMONT STREET, OXFORD,

December 22, 1875.

PREFACE.

THE number of British and American travellers who take unaffected interest in the early art of Europe is already large, and is daily increasing ; daily, also, as I thankfully perceive, feeling themselves more and more in need of a guide-book containing as much trustworthy indication as they can use, of what they may most rationally spend their time in examining. The books of reference published by Mr. Murray, though of extreme value to travellers who make it their object to see (in his, and their, sense of the word) whatever is to be seen, are of none whatever, or may perhaps be considered, justly, as even of quite the reverse of value, to travellers who wish to see only what they may in simplicity understand, and with pleasure remember : while the histories of art, and biographies

of artists, to which the more earnest student in his noviciate must have recourse, are at once so voluminous, so vague, and so contradictory, that I cannot myself conceive his deriving any other benefit from their study than a deep conviction of the difficulty of the subject, and of the incertitude of human opinions.

It seemed to me, on reading the essays collected in this volume, as they appeared in the periodical for which they were written, that the Author not only possessed, herself, a very true discernment of the qualities in mediæval art which were justly deserving of praise; but had unusually clear understanding of the degree in which she might expect to cultivate such discernment in the general mind of polite travellers: nor have I less admired her aptitude in collation of essentially illustrative facts, so as to bring the history of a very widely contemplated range of art into tenable compass, and very graceful and serviceable form. Her reading, indeed, has been, with respect to many very interesting periods of religious workmanship, much more extensive than my own; and when I consented to edit

the volume of collected papers, it was not without the assurance of considerable advantage to myself during the labour of revising them.

The revision, however, I am sorry to say, has been interrupted and imperfect:—very necessarily the last, from the ignorance I have just confessed of more than one segment of the great illuminated field of early religious art to which the writer most wisely has directed equal and symmetrical attention;—and interrupted, partly under extreme pressure of other occupation, and partly in very fear of being tempted to oppress the serenity of the general prospect, which I think these essays are eminently calculated to open before an ingenuous reader, with the stormy chiaro-scuro of my own preference and reprobation. I leave the work, therefore, absolutely Miss Owen's, with occasional note of remonstrance, but without retouch; though it must be distinctly understood that when I allow my name to stand as the Editor of a book, it is in no mere compliment (if my Editorship could indeed be held as such) to the genius or merit of the Author; but it means that I hold myself

entirely responsible, in main points, for the accuracy of the views advanced, and that I wish the work to be received, by those who have confidence in my former teaching, as an extension and application of the parts of it which I have felt to be incomplete.

J. RUSKIN.

OXFORD,

November 27, 1875.

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THE ART SCHOOLS OF MEDIÆVAL CHRISTENDOM.

CHAPTER I.

THE ART OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

	A.D.
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WHEN the Christian era dawned on the world, the embodiment of human passions and physical powers in the mythological art of Greece and Rome, had found its inevitable end in a sensual worship; and a religion more gross than had been that which the Israelites were destined to sweep out of Canaan degraded the nations of the civilised world. Thus, when the Christian faith first began to leaven mankind, it was reactionary in all its tendencies. Its first mission was to fight hand to hand with the corrupted

morality of the age ; truly a gigantic task, and one requiring the concentrated energies of its leaders. Remembering this, it is easy to imagine that the early Christians would eschew such forms of art as might remind their converts of cast-off superstitions, or introduce into religion an element of materialism ; it is obvious that the occasion demanded scrupulous care, in the removal of stumbling-blocks which might hinder the growth of an undefiled faith. Thus, sculpture, an art peculiarly devoted to the decoration of heathen worship, and also in itself tending somewhat to materialism, was but little cultivated at first. Images were, probably, entirely excluded from Christian worship ; and although Eusebius and Sozomen mention representations, as of SS. Peter and Paul, and even a statue of our Lord,* said to have been erected by the woman healed of the issue of blood, yet those must have been rare exceptions to the rule. Few attempts were even made, at least in the first two centuries, to bring the facts of the life and death of the God-Man, or the story of the Redemption, before the eyes of the faithful. By allegory and metaphor, indeed, by symbols and types, they loved to remind themselves of Him they wor-

* Some such statue did actually exist, since it is recorded that Julian the Apostate threw it down. See Lübke's 'History of Sculpture,' vol. i. bk. iv. ch. i.

shipped ; as the Vine, or the Fish, or the Lamb, or in the still dearer symbol of the Good Shepherd, or in Old Testament types they would represent Him ; but seldom in more familiar forms. Perhaps they feared to express the hitherto unrealised idea of Incarnate God by the representation of His Human Form ; perhaps they did not need such helps, who lived so near to their Lord.

The earlier Christian paintings are distinguished, indeed, by their close similarity to contemporary pagan decorations, and it has been often remarked of the art of the Catacombs, that but for some central figure or medallion giving a character to the whole, it would be difficult to believe that one were in a Christian building. Various causes no doubt combined to effect this, the chief of which probably was that, as Dr. Northcote observes, it was not in the power of the Christians to invent at once a new language in art. Extending S. Paul's principle that nothing is common or unclean to Christian people, they used fearlessly the symbols and even the mythology of paganism, exorcising the evil and inspiring the good with new and infinite meaning. It is probably a mistake to lay too much stress on the fear of idolatry in the early Church, or to accept it as sufficient reason for the scarcity of historical repre-

sentations. The symbolism of the early Christians has in fact been used to an unfair extent as an argument against the use of devotional painting in churches. No other kind of art was in reality possible to the age, than that of the classic style, and accordingly it was used, merely excluding idolatrous representations.

It was the time, too, of the deepest decline of the Roman Empire ; and, since the age of Augustus, art had been used so exclusively for the mere production of articles of luxury, that neither originality nor mechanical knowledge remained to it in Rome. Greek artists emigrated to Italy to build Roman temples ; imitations of Greek sculpture were set up in the palaces, statues of foreign workmanship brought by the Roman armies in innumerable quantities,* bronze work and pottery imported from Etruria. It was impossible that, in a period when all the wealth and power of Rome were unable to command original art, a small and despised sect, with no resources, should be able to embody new ideas, or find fresh forms for their thoughts.

Two characteristics of the temper and thought of the early Church are seen remarkably in its art. The

* See Perkins' 'Tuscan Sculptors,' Introduction, pp. xxxii-xxxiv. Five hundred bronze statues were taken from Delphi alone, to decorate the Golden House of Nero.

first shows itself in a symbolism, which seems to have been its natural language, so to say, the expression of an habitual groove of thought ; the other, in such a choice of subject as would remind ever of immortality rather than death ; of the Manger and Star of Bethlehem, rather than of the Cross and Sepulchre.

The preference for symbolical expression shows itself not only in the numerous allegorical figures representing sacred ideas, with which we are all familiar, but, often, in entire compositions, such as is to be seen in the instance of an ancient painting of the Catacomb of S. Callixtus. The Good Shepherd stands in the midst of the picture, the lost sheep on His shoulders ; on each side a man hastening away from Him, illustrative of the Church's commission to preach the Gospel. As they hurry on, streams of water pour from a rock on each side, representing sacramental grace, which they stretch out their hands to receive. Two sheep stand before each of them, one of each pair listening to the call, and on these two flow the waters of life ; of the other two, one has significantly turned his back on the Shepherd, and the other is eating grass. Of later date than this, on a sarcophagus of the fourth century, are sculptured, in minute groups between the arches, some still more curious symbolic representations.

The Baptism of Christ is figured by a sheep placed in a stream, on whose head another sheep is laying its paw ; the raising of Lazarus, by a sheep touching a dead man with a wand ; the three children in the furnace, and the striking of the rock by Moses, are also symbolised in the same way.

Another form of symbolism used by the early Church, and common in art until the end of the sixth century, is that of representing a subject or series of subjects from the Old Testament, as illustrative of the life of our Lord, and with the intent to dwell on the mystical interpretation. Noah in the Ark, Jonah under the ivy,* the three children in the furnace, the ascension of Elijah, the sufferings of Job, the sacrifice of Isaac, Daniel in the lions' den, Moses striking the rock, are familiar subjects in early Christian art. Historical pictures of our Lord's life are rare in Catacomb art, and the Adoration of the Magi seems to have been the favourite, as it was perhaps the first of this class of subject in early painting. The earliest

* In accordance with an early reading of the word 'gourd.' See 'Art Teaching of the Primitive Church,' by the Rev. R. St. John Tyrwhitt, Index, p. 347. 'Ivy,' *hedera*, is S. Jerome's rendering of the Septuagint word, for which he explained that he could not find a Latin equivalent, when S. Augustine objected to the alteration of the original sense in the Vulgate. I am indebted for this note to Mr. Tyrwhitt, and may add, as regards the quotation from his book, that there is an erratum in this passage of it. For 'Vulgate' read 'Septuagint.'

known picture of our Lord, is a head in the Catacomb of SS. Nereo and Achilleo, and another and similar one in S. Ponziano, of the sixth century, is thought by Mr. Hemans* to be the most beautiful of all the early ideal portraits of Christ. Representations of the Passion are altogether unknown in the earliest ages, and rare at any period until after the sixth century. Even the cross was always used by the early Christians rather as a sign of triumph, and of the victory of Life over Death, than as a reminder of the sufferings of Christ; and it was with buds and flowers springing from it, and gems inlaid within it, that they represented it. The earliest picture of the Passion is sculptured on a sarcophagus of the fourth century, in the Lateran Museum. There are five compartments, divided by pillars. The centre one contains the 'Labarum,'† doves picking at the wreath around it, and a cross below with two soldiers sleeping beneath. On one side is represented our Lord before Pilate, occupying

* 'Historic and Monumental Rome,' ch. ix. p. 348.

† The 'Labarum of Constantine,' chosen by him as his standard after the vision which appeared to him, was a spear with a transverse branch from which hung a purple banner covered with pearls. It was surmounted by a chaplet set with gems, within which was X P, which formed the monogram of our Lord's name. See Eusebius' 'Life of Constantine.'

two compartments ; on the other, He is carrying His cross, a soldier placing on His head a crown ; but it is not a crown of thorns—it is of flowers ; “the crown wherewith He was crowned in the day of the gladness of His heart.” Such was the gleam of brightness which lighted up the meditations of the early Church on the Passion of her Lord. One other sarcophagus* deserves special notice, that of Junius Bassus, a prefect of Rome, who, in the simple language of the primitive Church, “went to God, a neophyte,” A.D. 359. There are two rows of sculptured pictures, divided into five compartments each. Above, in the midst, sits the Lord enthroned, His feet resting on the earth, which is mythologically personified by Tellus. On one side He is before Pilate, on the other is the repentance of S. Peter. Below is the entry into Jerusalem, and on each side the sufferings of Job, and the delivery of Daniel typical of the Passion and Resurrection.†

Much discussion has taken place concerning the earlier representations of the blessed Virgin. There is no doubt, however, that the first pictures of the

* In the crypt of S. Peter's. The same one on which are sculptured the groups of sheep above mentioned.

† Mrs. Jameson gives an engraving of this sarcophagus in ‘The Life of Our Lord,’ vol. i. p. 12.

Virgin Mother represent her in the historical incidents of the Nativity and the Adoration. Whether or not the 'Orantes,' or praying female figures, were intended in any degree to suggest the idea of the intercession of the Mother of Christ, her figure does appear in this attitude of prayer, in painting, as also on some of the gilded glasses* of the Catacomb tombs. The first instance of the Mother and Child represented together—the primitive Madonna of Christian art—is in the Catacomb of S. Agnes, and is probably of the fourth century. She stands with her arms uplifted in prayer, while the Divine Child is in front of her, and also standing. It was probably after the Council of Ephesus (431), when the Nestorian heresy was denounced, and the title of 'Mother of God' insisted on, that the impetus was given to the increased devotion to the Virgin Mother. Among other representations of artistic interest in the fourth century, are a sarcophagus carving of S. Peter receiving from our Lord the keys which have been his symbol thence-

* The gilded glasses found in the Catacombs are the remains of glass cups which were buried with the martyrs, and supposed to have been used in the Agapæ or social feasts of the early Christians. Having been embedded in the fresh mortar, the bottoms of these glasses remained, when time had destroyed all the rest. There is a large collection in the Vatican, and a few are preserved in the British Museum.

forth throughout the range of Christian art; and a painting on the apse of a Catacomb chapel of the Lord enthroned in the midst of the twelve Apostles—the prototype of those glorious groups which should hereafter look down in solemn grandeur of purple and gold from the walls of the Italian churches. To the same century are also referred the first attempts to portray the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity in human form; of which perhaps the oldest remaining instance is on a sarcophagus in the Lateran Museum, of the fourth century, representing the creation of Eve.* That this questionable mode of representation was not common, however, we may conjecture from the scarcity of examples remaining. S. John Damascene (700–754) laid down the rule that “God, Who is bodiless and invisible,” should only be represented as the Incarnate Son, and other regulations were laid down by the Church on the subject. In the majority of instances in which the presence of God the Father is represented, the usual symbol is a hand, or at most a head, surrounded by clouds and nimbus. And although, in the creation of Adam and Eve, the Divine Creator is often represented as a young man, this was only in accordance with the belief of

* Hemans’ ‘Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art,’ ch. ii. p. 61.

the Church that the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity accomplished the act of creation. A description given by S. Paulinus of Nola, the great reviver of Church art in the next century, of a mosaic placed by himself in his cathedral church, shows the symbolic type then used to represent the mystery. "The Trinity," he begins, "shines in all the fullness of the mystery." Then he goes on to explain the form of the representation. "Christ is in the midst of the water, the Voice of the Father sounds in the clouds, the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a Dove."* This, be it observed, is not intended for a picture of the Baptism of Christ, since in all such representations S. John Baptist is present.

There were in Rome above sixty subterranean cemeteries, which were the earliest repositories of Christian art; five or six probably begun in Apostolic times;† four or five which existed in the second century; and two of the fourth century. They are computed‡ to amount, with all their ramifications, to an extent equal to 800 or 900 miles, and to contain between six and seven millions of Christian dead. Dr. Northcote is of opinion that the Catacombs

* Pascal's 'Institutions de l'Art Chrétien,' p. 37.

† According to Dr. Northcote.

‡ 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art,' ch. ii. p. 47.

were originally used exclusively for burial-places, which were permitted impartially to all by the laws of the land ; their use as places of worship dating only from the persecutions of the Christians. In the great tenth persecution under Diocletian, however, even these burial-places were confiscated to the state, and it is supposed that at that time the Christians broke away the staircases, and blocked up the entrances, in order to prevent the pagans from entering.

It is an authenticated fact that the early Christians were allowed the privilege, equally with the pagans, of possessing places of worship in Rome. On the site now occupied by S. Maria in Trastevere, a church is supposed to have been built in the third century ; and in the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235), there arose a dispute concerning a right of property on this place, between the Christians and some pagan innkeepers. On the matter being referred to the emperor, he pronounced the remarkable decision that it was "better God should be worshipped in that place, in whatever way, than that it should be given to the sellers of wine."* There were in the time of Diocletian (284-305),† and until the beginning

* Abbé Martigny's 'Dictionnaire des Antiquités Chrétiennes,' p. 78.

† "It were beyond our power," writes Eusebius, "to give account of the glory and liberty of Christianity, and the honour in which it was

of the fourth century, twenty-five of these churches in Rome itself, besides fifteen suburban churches, probably connected with the Catacombs. It is conjectured that the form of these primitive churches was that of an ark*—that favourite symbol of the early Christians for the Church of Christ—surmounted by a cylindrical roof, and with the addition of an apse for the sanctuary. Such was the opinion of the learned Patriarch of Constantinople, consulted by M. Texier;† and one church of this description at least exists in the East—that of Sion,—built, according to tradition, in Apostolic times.

Two ancient churches remain in Rome, the sites of which are consecrated by historical associations, more primitive and more sacred perhaps than gather around any other place beyond the Holy Land itself—those

held by Greeks and barbarians, before Diocletian. Servants of the imperial palaces declared freely their religion. Many Christians were in charge of provinces. Vast concourses of men flocked to the churches. They erected spacious churches in every city, daily increasing in magnitude and importance.”—Eusebius’ *‘Ecclesiastical History,’* book viii.

* “‘Let the church be oblong,’” say the *‘Apostolic Constitutions,’* “‘turned towards the east, having cells on both sides towards the east, as it is to resemble a ship, and let the throne of the Bishop be in the midst, with the presbytery sitting on either side of it, and the deacons standing by, clad in light but seemly raiment, for they are likened to sailors and oarsmen.’”—Lord Lindsay’s *‘History of Christian Art,’* vol. i. let. i. p. 20.

† Texier and Pullan’s *‘Byzantine Architecture,’* p. 49.

of S. Pudenziana and S. Clement. The former is built* on the subterranean remains of the mansion of the senator Pudens, mentioned in the Epistle to Timothy, and much of the ancient structure of this interesting building has been brought to light by the recent exertions of Mr. Parker. In this place, S. Peter lived, it is said, for seven years, and S. Paul was a frequent guest; here the great sacrifice was offered day by day, by Apostolic hands;† and here, as tradition says, the first ordination was held, and the saintly Clement, whose name was even then “written in the book of Life,” received the Apostolic charge.

Scarcely less interesting is the basilica of S. Clemente, which now comprises three distinct churches, one over the other. The earlier basilica was built by Adrian I. in 790, over a church of the fourth century, which occupied the site of the family mansion of S. Clement;‡ and it is perhaps the most perfect

* It was built first by Adrian I., then by Gregory VII., and lastly by Innocent II. The beautiful mosaic of the apse is thought to be a relic of the church of the ninth century, built by Adrian.

† The largest of the underground chambers, containing remains of painting on the walls, and of tessellated pavement, is supposed to have been the chapel. A side altar of the church still contains a part of the table said to have been used by S. Peter. ‘Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art,’ ch. i. p. 35.

‡ This is referred to by S. Jerome.

specimen remaining of the form and proportions of a primitive basilica, the details of the first church having been exactly preserved by Adrian in his restoration. Another church was again built over that of Adrian, in the twelfth century, in which are preserved the beautiful choir fittings of the lower church, among them, one of the few remaining specimens of the candelabrum used anciently for the 'Gospel light.'

The churches of the age of Constantine were either basilican, octagonal, or cruciform. The latter shape was only partially defined, with very slight projections, and of this the ancient rock church of Inkermann is an example.* A few octagonal churches of this age are said by Dr. Neale to remain in Lycia ; but it was not until the Lombard age, when the science of constructing domes had become well known again, that octagonal churches were common ; and the only early specimen of that form in Rome, known as the Baptistery of Constantine, was not built until the pontificate of Sixtus III., who died in 440. Round churches were mostly built for baptisteries, as was that of S. Constantia, the only church remaining entire, of the age of Constantine. After the death of

* Dr. Neale's 'Introduction to History of the Eastern Church,' vol. i. bk. i. ch. iii. p. 227.

his daughter Constantia, it was converted into a sepulchral chapel for her, but was not used as a church till the thirteenth century.* The basilican form was the rule for the churches of the age of Constantine. When Christianity finally emerged from persecution, and the primitive churches no longer sufficed for Christian worship, many of the basilicas or judgment halls of ancient Rome were given over for the use of the new religion, and thus became the models of construction for, as they gave the name to, the churches of that age. The word corresponds with that signifying palace,† and was originally given either because of the size of the building, or because the royal office of administering justice was dispensed there. "The basilicas," wrote S. Isidore of Seville (circa 565-636), "were first the abode of kings, or the palaces in which they rendered justice ; and it is from them that the name comes. Now, the Divine temples are called basilicas because it is there that the worship of God, the King of kings, is offered, and that sacrifice is made to Him." These buildings were oblong, with a semicircular recess at one end for the judges ; a short transept crossed the upper part, where the

* See Gally Knight's 'Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy.' On S. Constantia.

† Ibid. Introduction.

advocates used to sit, the gallery over it being reserved for the public. The basilicas were thus admirably adapted for Christian use. The semicircle became the seats of the higher clergy, the colonnades divided off the parts apportioned to the different classes of worshippers, and the galleries served for the women.

The churches of the age of Constantine were very plain in their exterior, being generally built of brick, and having for their sole ornament the sculptured architraves which surmounted the porch, and which were generally taken from some ancient building. The science of architecture had shared the deep decline of the arts in Rome at this period, and so fatal to their duration was the insufficient knowledge of the builders, combined with the unwise haste of the emperor, who exacted that a church should be finished in a given time,* that of the numerous churches built by Constantine in Rome, only one remains entire.† The interior was usually divided into three parts by columns supporting round arches, the capitals being taken from some classical building, as in many cases were the columns themselves. Stone

* 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' ch. iv. p. 128.

† The historian Zosimus says that most of them fell into ruin shortly after his life-time.

roofs were unknown at this period, since the builders were unable to make the necessary calculations regarding the weight. An open rafter roof, therefore, completed these primitive churches, generally concealed by a flat ceiling of gilded panels. The faithful were summoned to worship by the striking of an iron instrument in the porch, until the invention of bells, in the fifth century. No belfries existed in Italy until the eighth century, when the first was raised by the side of S. Peter's Basilica, by Pope Stephen II., and the feature of the Campanile introduced thus late into Italian architecture, was never considered as a part of the structure, but remained a separate erection.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to give the exact date of Constantine's abandonment of paganism. Not long after his victories over Maxentius (312 A.D.), celebrated for their connection with the legendary appearance of the cross to the emperor and the institution of the 'Labarum' as his standard, he began to extend favours to the Christian Church. In the next year, he endowed the Church with the right to hold and inherit property; a permission far more valuable, as Dr. Milman remarks,* than personal

* 'History of Latin Christianity,' vol. i. bk. i. ch. ii. p. 73.

gifts of money or land would have been; since it laid the foundations of the wealth which the Church gradually acquired, without arousing the jealousy of the aristocracy. He also revised the inheritances of Christian families; and in cases in which no heir claimed the property of the martyrs, it was delivered over to the Church. It was probably not till 323 A.D. that Constantine really accepted the Christian faith, although it was several years before this that he conferred the splendid gift of the Lateran palace on the Bishops of Rome, and also himself assisted in laying the foundations of the Basilica of S. Peter. These two churches, together with S. Paul's on the Ostian Way, built on the spot of that Apostle's martyrdom, were the first churches of Rome.

Art had, as before observed, fallen very low, in Italy, at the time of Constantine's accession. The science of building, in which the Romans had excelled in the age of Augustus, had been gradually lost; the sculpture produced was rude and clumsy, and the painting was of the coarsest kind. There is scarcely a single allusion to ornamental stonework of this age, and the only branch of art which seems to have retained any position in Rome was that of metal-work. Etruria, the birthplace of Italian art, had in the Augustan age been renowned for the

most beautiful wrought metal-works of all kinds, especially bronzes,* and also for engraving of gold and setting of jewellery. The genius of the Etruscan race preserved through all the succeeding centuries of decadence the traditions of art, and Etruria furnished Rome with all articles of ornament and luxury during the time of the later empire. That the art of metal-working in its various branches was in great requisition in Rome, we know from the existence there, in the period of which we are writing, of the guilds of smiths and goldsmiths, chiefly composed of emigrants from Etruria.† Articles of precious metal, such as silver lamps and *coronæ*, were of not uncommon use among the Christians, even in times of persecution. "We know," said the accusers of S. Laurence, "that in your nightly meetings candles are borne in golden candlesticks."‡ In the Diocletian persecution, when the goods of the Christians were confiscated, the number of articles found in one house, where the Christians were wont to meet, were two gold chalices, six silver ones, six cruets and seven candlesticks of silver, besides other lamps and candle-

* To the last period of Etruscan art (circa 200 B.C.) belong the 'Orator' of the Uffizi, and various bronzes in the Vatican.

† 'Tuscan Sculptors.' See Introduction.

‡ 'Dictionnaire des Antiquités Chrétiennes,' article *Cièrges*, p. 152.

sticks of bronze.* In 203 A.D. Zephyrinus, Bishop of Rome, ordered that the sacramental chalice should be of gold or silver. In the time of Constantine the utensils in precious metal considered necessary for a Christian church were altars, chalices, *amulæ* (vessels for holding the sacramental wine), *coronæ*, chandeliers, *pharæ cantharæ* or candelabra, smaller lamps called *pharæ*, thuribles and crosses†—a considerable list when we consider the amount of metal necessary for such large works as were some of them. We can well imagine, indeed, that if Christian worship was enhanced by gold and silver in the ages of poverty, distress, and persecution, the churches of the Constantinian era must have shone with a wondrous glory, as the rich gifts from the wealthy city, year by year accumulated in the sanctuaries. An account remains written by Damasus, Bishop of Rome (367–385), of the first church of Constantine, the primitive Basilica of S. John Lateran. It was, in architectural form, probably only a great hall standing in the midst of the Lateran buildings; and it was built with such inferior workmanship that it fell into utter ruin in the ninth century; but the interior was very magnificent. There were in it statues of

* Dr. Northcote's 'Roma Sotterranea,' ch. iii. note to p. 52.

† 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art,' ch. iv. p. 134.

our Lord and the twelve Apostles, cast in pure silver, five feet in height. A second silver statue of Christ enthroned occupied the apse. Four silver angels stood around, with jewelled eyes, lance in hand. The great candelabrum before the altar had fifty golden lamps; five hundred pounds of gold lined the roof; seven silver altars stood in various parts of the church, each having one golden paten and chalice, and two silver sets, all inlaid with jewels.*

The Baptistery of this church, inaccurately called the Baptistery of Constantine, is of later date, having been founded by Celestine I. (422-432), and completed by Sixtus III. (432-440), who adorned it with its beautiful porphyry columns.† This magnificent Basilica lay in ruins for many years, during which the priceless treasures with which it was filled became the plunder of the citizens. Little now remains besides the Baptistery to remind us either of the ancient structure or the almost equally interesting basilica of the tenth century, which was built on its ruins; and the Renaissance church has enclosed all that remained of the grand old walls within in its cold grasp. In the course of some repairs were found the coins of thirteen emperors, all doubtless contributors to the

* 'Institutions Liturgiques,' by Dom Guéranger, vol i. ch. v. p. 97.

† See Anastasius.

grandeur of the historic pile, within the walls of which lived the Bishops of Rome for a thousand years, and in whose glorious church they were successively crowned and buried. No vestige remains of the decorations of this time-honoured church, save the solemn, melancholy head of Christ which still looks down from the apse, inlaid within the thirteenth-century mosaics ; and of its historical relics, including the sacred vessels brought from Jerusalem, only the four gilt bronze columns, brought, filled with earth, from the Holy Land.

It was not only by gifts of gold and lands that Constantine sought to enhance the prestige of the new religion. He did everything in his power to revive the degenerated arts of architecture and painting ; founding schools at Constantinople and in the provinces, and gathering sculpture from all parts of the ancient world, to serve as decoration for his new cathedral, and as models for the artists. A hundred statues of the Greek masters stood, it is said, before S. Sophia ; Greek work was studied by the young artists in the Eastern Rome, and the emperor concentrated his efforts here, in the fond hope of nourishing into life a school which should portray Christian history and tradition, in the perfect lines of Greek art. The Ravenna mosaics prove that the

effort to revive the study of antique models, was not altogether in vain ; and they gleam from their golden grounds, with something of the classic grace of form and arrangement which, from the study of Greek art, still lingered in the schools of Constantinople. But the attempt to amalgamate the two schools was as hopeless as the putting of new wine into old bottles ; and it failed, though not ignobly. The Roman Empire was already far gone in its decline, and it is not at such periods that nations produce new schools of science and art. The Romans, moreover, in their greatest age, had never developed an art of their own. Their architecture was a modification of that of the Greeks ; their ornamental work was copied from Greek models ; most of their statuary which has remained was the work of Greek artists ; and their palaces and temples were furnished with the spoils of other nations. Rome had not been able to found a school of art in the days of her glory ; still less was she likely to succeed in the time of her rapid decay. The dream of Constantine should be fulfilled, though not then. The time should indeed come when Christian art should preach the Christian faith in lovelier forms and more perfect lines than ever Athens or Corinth saw in the days of their renown ; but the men should be reared, not in the exotic

splendour of the Oriental city, but among the far-off lily-fields of Florence, and by the still waters of the Venetian islands.

Much discussion has taken place, as to the degree in which the early Church sanctioned the use of images in her worship, and it is a difficult question to determine. Great prejudice against pictorial helps to devotion was no doubt excited in the Eastern provinces, by the fact that both statuary and painting were employed so universally by the semi-idolatrous Gnostics in their worship. Gnosticism was a strange mixture of Christianity and paganism, and images of our Lord and of heathen deities were used promiscuously by them in their churches. They, in fact, regarded Christ in the same light as the gods of antiquity, and revered Him in much the same degree as did the Emperor Alexander Severus, who placed a statue of our Lord among his Lares. It should, therefore, always be borne in mind, that the bitter invectives of Tertullian, and the severe strictures of S. Clement of Alexandria against representations of sacred persons, were aimed at the shocking abuses of them consequent on the Gnostic heresy. When we consider that immediately on the peace of Constantine the new churches were filled simultaneously with such objects of veneration, and that they were

sanctioned, without a dissentient word, by the Church, it is impossible to believe, either that sculpture was unknown to Christian worship previously, or that it was contrary to the spirit of primitive Christianity. It is indeed unquestionable that the fathers were familiar with the use and knew the value of art. S. Augustine was accustomed to representations of our Lord and the Apostles ;* S. Ambrose recognised in a dream the portraits he knew of S. Peter and S. Paul ;† S. Chrysostom used images in his own devotions. Gregory the Great even blamed the Bishop of Marseilles, for destroying images to which he found the people paying superstitious honour. It was necessary, he emphatically said, to repress abuses, but not to destroy the cause of them. "Man needs to be led by means of the senses, and images are the books of those who have no others."‡ It would seem in fact, that the question of their advisability was never seriously raised in the Church until the Iconoclastic heresy, and it is unquestionable that when the attention of councils was called to the matter, after the excitement had subsided, they not

* August. 'Contra Faustum,' lib. xxii. cap. lxxiii.

† Amb. 'Epist. de int. corp. Gervas et Prôtas.'

‡ 'Guide de l'Art Chrétien,' by the Comte de Saint-Laurient, vol. i.

only pronounced unhesitatingly in favour of images and pictures, but ordered their use in churches and public places. In the Second Council of Nicæa (787), the three hundred and fifty Eastern bishops assembled, proclaimed, without a dissentient voice, that images and pictorial representations "attested that the Word had taken human nature really, and not apparently;" and advocated their use in unmistakable language. They pronounced that the "form of the holy and life-giving Cross, venerable and holy images, whether of painting or of mosaic, or any other material, should be exposed in the holy churches of God, on vases and sacred vestments, on walls, on tablets, in houses, and on public roads; as well the images of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, as those of our immaculate Lady the Mother of God, those of the venerable angels, and in general of all holy and just men." "The more they are seen in their images," concluded the fathers, "the more those who contemplate them are excited to remembrance and love of the originals." They laid down clearly the difference between the reverence due to saints and the *latria* reserved for God; but they sanctioned the custom of paying honour to images, such as burning candles and incense before them, concluding, "He who honours the image honours in it him whom the image repre-

sents."* It is true that the Western Church, now becoming more and more separated from the Eastern, had no share in this council; but in 732, while the controversy was still at its height, a council at Rome maintained the reverence due to images by decrees insisting on their use; and in 794, the Western Council of Frankfort issued similar declarations on the subject. Indeed, as the Roman Church had so firmly repulsed the Iconoclastic heresy, there was comparatively little need for it to promulgate decrees on the subject. Leo the Isaurian objected to Gregory II. that in the six Œcumenical Councils there had been no mention of images. "Good reason," exclaimed the Pope. "When did you ever read that one must eat and drink in order to live? The use of images has been transmitted to us as a thing not less natural."

That there were local disturbances on the question of sacred art is, of course, a matter of history. The 36th Council of Elvira, in Spain, discussed the subject as early as 305 A.D., from which we may observe to what a remote time in the Christian era the use of images goes back. This council decreed that within its jurisdiction images should not be used in churches, nor "that which is adored, painted on the walls." It

* Ibid. Also 'Latin Christianity,' vol. ii, book iv. ch. vii. p. 363.

is probable, however, that the latter prohibition, and perhaps the whole decree, was aimed against representations of God the Father, and the Blessed Trinity; and in any case it was but a local Spanish Council legislating for its own emergencies. A similar prohibition was probably issued in some of the districts of the Eastern Church, in that century, since a letter from the Bishop of Salamis to the Bishop of Jerusalem seems to point to some recognised objections.

"On my journey," he writes, "through Anablata,* I found a curtain† at the door of the church on which was painted a figure of Christ, or of some saint, I forget which. As I saw that it was the image of a man, which is against the command of the Scriptures, I tore it down and gave it to the church authorities, with the advice to use it as a winding-sheet for the next poor person who might have occasion for one."‡ It is noticeable that this

* A village in Palestine.

† The doors of churches were usually furnished with curtains of costly and beautiful material. Those given by Constantius to S. Sophia, Constantinople, were embroidered with gold. The curtains before the sanctuary or *bema* were most frequently worked with the figure of S. Michael, guarding, as it were, the holy place. The Armenian Church, to this day, retains the *bema* veils. See 'Introduction to the History of the Eastern Church,' vol. i. bk. i. ch. ii. p. 194.

‡ Wornum's 'Epochs of Painting,' ch. xii. p. 133.

somewhat arbitrary personage quotes no decree of synod, or council, for his act; which he probably would have done, had any been in force. In fact, a synod at Jerusalem itself, afterwards, issued a declaration in favour of images (767 A.D.).

It was in this first age of Christian art, when painting had sunk to the lowest imaginable level,* that the art of mosaic, hitherto confined within narrow and conventional limits, became gradually cultivated by the artists of the new schools. Among the Greeks and Romans, mosaic was confined chiefly to the decoration of pavements, and formed of coloured stones and marbles, arranged in geometrical patterns or simple compositions. Such are the mosaics in S. Antonio Abbate at Rome, the birds of the Callixtine Catacomb, and others.† There were two kinds of mosaic: one, composed of large pieces of coloured marble, arranged into a picture; the other of small square pieces of marble or coloured substances forming the tessellated pavements. The ancient Romans used only square cubes, generally,

* Mr. Scott notices the remarkable superiority of plastic to pictorial art, even in the earlier age of Pompeii. See 'Half-hour Lectures on Art,' lect. i. p. 8.

† See 'Art Teaching of the Primitive Church,' by Rev. R. St. John Tyrwhitt, ch. v.

though not always, of marble ; and of these, there are some fine specimens in the British Museum. In the later empire, coloured glass and pottery were cut into shapes and made into designs for covering walls and ceilings.* The art of mosaic seems gradually to have left Rome, and centred in Constantinople, and after the ninth century there are few traces of it discernible in the Western capital. The Western school retained, indeed, for long, its characteristics of dress and gesture, as distinguished from those of the Greek school ; but it ceased to occupy a position of any importance, while the Byzantine school of mosaic constitutes an era in the history of art. The use of gold leaf laid under white glass as a background for pictures was certainly a device of the colour-loving Eastern artists ; the effect being produced by laying the gold between a thick and a thin sheet of glass. It is thought by Mr. Wyatt that this system of glass mosaics was adopted in Constantinople soon

* See Parker's 'Mosaic Pictures in Rome and Ravenna,' p. 22.

Enamelling on glass was also known to the ancients, as is testified both by Heraclius and Theophilus. The drawing was executed on a plate of opaque glass, coloured glasses being ground to fine powder painted on with gum-water and then fused. Coloured sheets of glass were also covered with gold-leaf, and then etched in patterns so as to show the colour beneath the surface ; a sheet of white glass laid above preserving the gold from injury. See 'Chefs-d'œuvres of the Industrial Arts,' article *Glass*.

after the age of Constantine. The groups of all the great Byzantine works glow from these golden backgrounds with a glory quite indescribable ; and no other pictorial art could possibly have been so happily adapted to the conventional drawing and limited knowledge of the age. With this work were filled the dreary aisles of the Christianised basilicas of Rome and Ravenna ; and by its means have been handed down to us, comparatively intact, a series of historical paintings which are as fresh and brilliant at this day, as when, a thousand years ago, they were left by the artists' hands. And while the works of the great masters of Christian art are, alas ! fading day by day from the walls of Florence and Venice, this early school still stand undimmed, as age after age passes over it.

A description of the general form and arrangement of the Basilica Churches may not be out of place here, as serving to convey some idea of the art requirements of the early Church.

The Basilica Churches were divided into three principal parts : Narthex, Nave, and Apse.

The vestibule or portico, sometimes called the first narthex, was supported by columns varying in number with the size of the church—two, six, or eight ; the space between them opening into the un-

covered square called the *Atrium*,* which was quite open to the sky. A kind of cloister, supported by columns, ran round the outer edge, closed in between the columns by a network of wood, low enough to lean over and watch the waters of the fountain which always played in the midst. Here the faithful washed their hands and faces before entering the holy building; and round the fountain were often written such words as—"Wash thy sins, and not only thy face."† "The cleansing of the hands," said S. Cyril, "is a symbol that we must be made clean from all our sins and iniquities." "All men who propose to communicate, first wash their hands," directed S. Maximus.‡ The *Narthex* was, in the larger basilicas, often subdivided into the exterior narthex, which was like

* There are a few of these left in Italy. One is attached to the Church of S. Clemente at Rome, which is built over the subterranean basilica; another is at Milan, built in the ninth century, belonging to the interesting basilica of S. Ambrogio; and a third and double one at SS. Quattro Coronati in Rome, built three times, first by Honorius I. in the seventh century, then by Leo IV. in the ninth, and lastly by Paschal II. in the twelfth century. Here also is the only remaining example of the gallery for women. See Hemans' 'Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' ch. vi. p. 264.

† This inscription is still to be seen in S. Sophia, Constantinople; if old, the custom was that all who intended to be communicants should wash their hands. The Russian peasants still do so before going to church, and in winter will bathe them in the churchyard snow.

‡ Dr. Neale's 'Primitive Liturgies,' note to p. 179.

another vestibule, and the interior narthex, which joined the nave; the different parts being divided by walls. By the time of Justinian, the ancient discipline had relaxed, and catechumens, apostates, and murderers, were all admitted into the narthex. In order to prevent the intrusion of such persons into the place where the sacred offices were said, a double narthex became often necessary. S. Sophia had two, the outer one communicating with the inner one by five doors, the inner one with the nave by nine.* In the first narthex, the dead were buried, and the Jews and half converted remained, a curtain shutting out the sacred services from their view. Under the columns of the court, or in the porch, were placed the first class of penitents, called the *Weepers*, unless capital offenders, in which case they were obliged to kneel in the open space. In the interior narthex, the prayers and offices were said, and the *Catechumens*, *Energumens*,† and the penitents called the *Hearers*, knelt, the latter so called because allowed to hear the offices and instructions.

Once a year, on the Eve of the Epiphany, there was a great ceremonial for blessing the waters

* These beautiful bronze doors are still in existence.

† Those who were supposed to be possessed by evil spirits.

of the fountain in the atrium. In course of time, and as the necessity for all these arrangements passed away, vestibules and atrium all became united in one great narthex, and vases of blessed water placed at the entrance superseded the fountains. Few, perhaps, guess the remote antiquity of the use of holy water; yet this is its origin,* for it is certain that these fountains were never used as baptisteries. In very early times rivers and running streams were always used, as consecrated by Apostolic custom; and in times of persecution the reservoirs of the Catacombs became the baptismal fonts.† From the time of Constantine's accession, baptisteries were always built separately, and decorated in as costly a manner as the church itself. Baptism was the initiation into the sacred mysteries of the Church, and the holy ground of the sanctuary of God's immediate Presence, might not be trod by the unilluminated.

* Its use may strictly be said to be older than this date, since the first institution of blessed water, placed at the entrance of churches, was by S. Alexander I., Bishop of Rome, 109-119 A.D. This bishop was martyred under Adrian. It is worthy of remark that by him, also, was prescribed to the Church the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist, and the mixing of water with the wine, in the chalice.

† The only Catacomb baptistery still supplied with pure spring water is that of S. Ponziano; above it is an ancient picture of the baptism of Christ.

Entering through the inner door of the narthex, we pass into the great nave or body of the church, called the *Trapeza*, divided by columns into three parts. The middle part was only occupied by the choir, who sat under the dome; the *cancellæ*, or latticed screen, from which our chancels derive their name and origin, portioning off the square which they occupied.* The men occupied the south isle, the women the north; and these were subdivided by wooden screens into, first, a space near the doors for the third class of penitents, then the places for the faithful, and, lastly, the part near the sanctuary, for the men and women more especially consecrated to God and the service of the Church.

As soon as ever the Church, on emerging from the Catacombs, had time to consider the arrangement of public worship, the sanctuary was separated from the choir by a screen called the *Iconostasis*,† called by S. Gregory Nazianzen (328–390) “the screen which separates the two worlds”; which is retained to this day in the Eastern Church. Eusebius refers to one such screen, in the Church of the Apostles at Constan-

* It would seem, from the ‘Apostolic Constitutions,’ that they were provided with seats. See Lord Lindsay’s ‘Christian Art,’ vol. i. let. i. p. 20.

† Because of the *icons*, or figures, represented on it.

tinople, made of gilded brass. The most ancient one in existence is that of the rock-church of Tepeker-man, in the Crimæa, built by the Arians in the middle of the fourth century.* The iconostasis was quite distinct from the cancella, or chancel screen, which afterwards became the chief division of Western churches. The apsidal structure became gradually modified, until the flat east end necessitated the placing of the altar against the wall, and obliged the clergy to descend to the choir, which thus became amalgamated with the sanctuary; and the rood-screen took the place of the iconostasis. A plan of one of the finest of the transitional churches, built early in the ninth century at St. Gall, is still preserved in the abbey. Both east and west ends are apsidal, with semicircular courts running round them, that of the eastern apse being called the *Paradise*. The long nave is divided by a screen; in one part the font, in the other an altar. The choir also is divided into two parts, the first containing pulpit and *ambons*; the second, or choir proper, seats for the choir. The 'Confession' lies between it and the sanctuary, which is raised seven steps, and has

* A plate of it is given in Neale's 'Introduction to the History of the Eastern Church,' vol. i. bk. i. ch. ii. p. 193.

seats for the ecclesiastics. The different doors, which formed so important a characteristic of ancient churches, each received a mystical name, about which there has been much confusion and dispute. Dr. Neale gives them as follows. Those dividing the sanctuary from the choir were the Holy Doors; those between choir and nave, the Angelic Doors; those separating nave from narthex, the Royal, or Silver Doors; and those between narthex and porch, the Beautiful Gates.*

There were, sometimes, three apses, or semicircular terminations to the eastern end of the church; the middle one, of course, forming the sanctuary, or *Bema*, while the northern end was the 'chapel of the *Prothesis*,' where the preparation of the Elements took place, and whence the procession issued; and the southern termination was used as the sacristy.

The great dome, that unfailing characteristic of Byzantine churches, rose in the midst of the church, above the choir, north and south of which were the *ambons*, or pulpits for reading. The word signifies 'a higher place,' the ambon being raised a few steps, so as to command the whole church; sometimes there

* Neale's 'Introduction to the History of the Eastern Church,' vol. i. bk. i. ch. ii. p. 195.

were two or three of them, sometimes only one. When there were two, the highest was used for chanting the Gospel, for preaching, issuing the edicts of the Church, reading the dyptichs,* and announcing fasts and festivals; hence, also, the newly baptised made profession of their faith. From the second was read the Epistle, and from the third, if there were one, the Scripture readings. In S. Clemente, at Rome, is a great candlestick joined to the ambon, the 'Gospel light' of ancient usage, before the establishment of the custom—itsself of great antiquity—of carrying lights in procession before the Gospel reader. Raised a few steps above the dais, and between it and the sanctuary gates, was a small space called the *Solea*, where sat the sub-deacons, readers, and candidates for the priesthood. The floor of this was paved with marble or other costly material—that of S. Sophia was of onyx—for here the faithful came to receive communion, together with such priests as had, for some fault, been excluded from the sanctuary.

Underneath most ancient churches there was usually a crypt, in which rested the body of the

* A two-leaved tablet, containing the names of the living and departed who were to be remembered in the Oblation prayer (answering to our Church Militant prayer).

martyr to whom the church was dedicated, and which was between the sanctuary and the nave of the church. Over this spot was placed an open grating, which looked down on the tomb of the martyr, and which was called the 'Confession.' The early Christians had brought the custom with them from the Catacombs, where it was common to keep open the places beneath which they laid their martyred dead to rest, and with lingering tenderness to gather and hold their worship around the spots hallowed by the sacred dust. So the desire of gathering their holy dead as near as possible within sight and touch, remained long among the Christians, and when it was not possible to have a crypt or chapel, they often made a small space to contain the dust of the martyrs within the elevation of the soil of the *solea*. After a time this also was discontinued, and they contented themselves with enclosing 'relics' within the centre of the altar.* 'Confessors,' or those who confessed the faith before the civil tribunal, were not allowed the privilege of being laid under the altar, until the sixth century.

Lastly, we come to the inner sanctuary, the interior

* In the ancient altar, of the third century, in the crypt of S. Gervais, at Rouen, there are holes made in the thickness of the slab, to receive relics.

of the great apse. Entrance here was sternly forbidden to the laity, and prohibitions renewed from time to time by councils. Doubtless the proud nobility of the Roman Empire struggled hard to establish for themselves some place of honour in the church ; since even in the days of S. James, it was needful to rebuke the exclusiveness of the wealthy converts of a Christian community. The despotic Eastern emperors,* however, succeeded in establishing for themselves a right to sit within the sanctuary, and the emperor's acknowledged seat in S. Sophia was on the *solea* opposite that of the Patriarch's ; but S. Ambrose, towards the end of the fifth century, vehemently withstood the innovation. It was this remarkable man who made the first sustained effort to assert the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church above all imperial tyranny or civil authority ; and so great was his influence over the Emperor Theodosius, that, on S. Ambrose insisting that the imperial seat should be placed outside the sanctuary, he not only obeyed, but remained faithful to the commands of the saintly bishop of Milan in whatever church in his dominions he entered. The semi-dome of the apse

* The example of Constantine at the Nicæan Council is quoted by Martigny. See ' Dictionnaire des Antiquités Chrétiennes,' p. 97.

was of course richly decorated with precious stones and marbles, or, as time went on, more generally with brilliant mosaics; the great figure of our Lord in glory being the almost invariable centre on which the eye would rest. Around the semicircle, or *synthronus*, were rows of seats for the dignitaries according to their degrees; in the centre of it, the bishop's throne, facing westwards; the altar being placed at the spring of the apse.

Over the altar rose the richly decorated Baldachino, or *Ciborium*,* of four or more columns, supporting a

* The word ciborium is derived from *kiborion*, which signifies a cup; and from the similarity of the domed roof to the Egyptian lotus, which was used as a drinking cup, the ciborium received its name.

Baldachino, *baldakinus*, was derived from *baudekin*, the name for a precious stuff used for vestments and altar hangings, which again took its name from Babylon or Baldacco, where such material was originally made. Such an embroidered canopy was first used in ecclesiastical processions, about 1250, on the entrance of Innocent IV. into Milan, when it was carried over him as a mark of special honour. The ciborium adopted was quite distinct from it, being part of the architectural structure of the church, and an indispensable adjunct of the altars of early Christendom. It was in fact only the introduction of the flat east end in the Gothic period, which made it possible to dispense with the ciborium without giving an appearance of meagreness and poverty to the altar. The ciborium and the baldachino were not in any degree synonymous, until the sixteenth century, by which time the increasing frequency of the custom of carrying the Sacrament in procession, had probably occasioned the confusion of the movable baldachino or canopy, originally used to carry over great personages, and gradually adopted as a processional covering for the Sacrament, with the permanent altar canopy called the ciborium. It is curious

domed roof surmounted by a cross. A small erection was sometimes within it, with the columns supported on the altar, called the *peristerium*, which contained the silver dove in which the reserved Sacrament was kept for the sick; but the original custom was to hang the dove from the midst of the ciborium roof. It was the ancient custom of the Church to suspend veils from this frame, which were only drawn aside after the Consecration, for the people to behold the consecrated Elements; and both ciborium and veils were parts of ecclesiastical furniture in the time of S. John Chrysostom (398–407 A.D.), since he presupposes the familiarity of his hearers with their use in his ‘Homilies.’ “When the Heavenly Host is on the Altar; when Jesus Christ the royal Lamb is slain; when you hear the words, ‘Again and again in peace let us make our supplications unto the Lord;’ when you see the veils and curtains drawn from the altar — then imagine that you see the

that Mr. Phillimore, in his defence of the baldachino case in 1873, should have omitted to work out a distinction which constitutes a stronger argument than any other, in favour of the baldachino; since the chief point of his opponent was to ignore the distinction between the ancient ciborium and the mediæval baldachino; and, assuming that they were identical, to deduce the easy conclusion that both were associated with the corrupted doctrine of the Sacrament, called Transubstantiation.

heavens opened, and the angels descend on the earth." *

It is impossible not to feel that there was a deep symbolism in this arrangement of the Holy of Holies in the early Christian churches. Our thoughts instinctively go back to that mystical vision in which "round about the Throne were four-and-twenty seats ; and upon the seats four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment. And lo, in the midst of the throne and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain." Doubtless that vision of intense adoration, that symbol of the worship of redeemed creation, led by the four-and-twenty elders, as they cast their golden crowns before the Throne, and sang the Song of Moses and the Lamb, was present ever to the inward eyes of the saintly patriarch, as he gazed on the glories, and led the worship, of his beloved church of S. Sophia.

* Under S. Gervais, at Rouen, is a crypt-church of the third century, of great interest, thought to have been one of the churches built in imitation of the Catacomb places of worship. It has a semicircular apse raised one step, an arch somewhat lower down, cutting off a third of the church and forming space for a choir. On each side of the apse is a strong iron hook about eight feet from the ground, on which the sanctuary veils were hung ; there are also indications on the walls of ancient painting. There is, in most ancient liturgies, a prayer called the 'Prayer of the Veil,' said after the withdrawal of the veil. That in the Liturgy of St. James is thought by Dr. Neale to be possibly of Apostolic origin. See 'Primitive Liturgies.'

CHAPTER II.

THE BYZANTINE CHURCHES.

	A.D.
Building of S. Sophia, Constantinople, by Justinian ..	532-561
Building of S. Paolo-fuori-le-mura, by Theodosius ..	386

WE have glanced briefly at the position and limits of Christian art at the beginning of the Christian era ; but it is not within our scope to dwell on this period of vast and varied interests. How the great capital of the world, with its strange mixture of races, and complex social organisation, became Christian ; how Christianity, after gathering in her converts by tens and by hundreds, and then by thousands, out of all ranks and classes, at last absorbed whatever of moral or spiritual vitality there was left in the corrupt and licentious city, we cannot now consider. The tide of life flowed on in Christian Rome much as before the conversion of Constantine. The commerce, the business, the civil and military organisation of the imperial city were unaltered ; and if Christianity

protested against the gladiatorial shows, the licentiousness of the theatres, and the luxuriousness of the banquets, it was necessary that she should herself present some outward attraction for the cultivated and restless spirits which, from various causes, now accepted her philosophy. It has been said by one* in our day, well versed in human nature, that the wonderful extent and power of idolatry had its root in the fact that it fully satisfied the three great passions of men, the first and most powerful of which he asserts to be the passion for personal intercourse with the Creator. To this all the mythologies of the ancient world point, and all history, sacred and secular, proves the indomitable strength of a yearning which, in the eternal counsels of God, was destined to find its satisfaction in the Incarnation. To provide, then, a ritual which should, by its imposing beauty and splendid surroundings, attract converts from the rival ranks of paganism, was the great work of the Church in the age of Constantine. That she endeavoured to fulfil this requirement by the adaptation of all forms of art to her service, there can be no doubt. The most costly materials, the most exquisite harmonies, the finest workmanship

* Père Lacordaire.

which the age could produce, were all lavished to enhance a majestic ritual. The offices of the Church, probably, became, to an extent which it is difficult for us to realise, an integral part of the lives of the Christians of the early centuries. Her solemn and beautiful rites had attuned the nobler spirits to herself, and taken the place of the more sensual excitement of theatres and gladiatorial shows; and a magnificent external worship was an attraction which spiritualised while it satisfied the senses. The revolutions and catastrophes which have convulsed Rome and Constantinople have, however, left us no vestiges of the glory which shone around the first dawn of the Christian Church, and we can form but a faint idea of it from the fragmentary descriptions which have been left us, of two or three churches, by the historians of the age.

One unaltered church only remains, built by Constantine as a Baptistery, and afterwards converted by him into a sepulchral chapel for his daughter.* It is a round building with a domed roof, surrounded by a vaulted corridor, having granite columns; and there are three apses, added to the rotunda, probably,

* A not uncommon use for a baptistery. It is recorded that Cuthbert II., Saxon archbishop of Canterbury, built a round baptistery behind the apse of the cathedral, for the double purpose of celebrating baptisms and of constituting a sepulchre for the prelates of that see.

when the building was converted into a sepulchral chapel.* The beautiful mosaics of the aisle vaults have been much ruined by modern restoration, but retain enough of their early character to be one of the most interesting memorials of Christian art in Rome. Some are of simply arranged patterns ; some are pagan in character, and represent arabesques, animals, and birds ; while others have the entire history of the vintage mingled amidst graceful tracery. In one part, the cross is used as an ornamental pattern. The beautiful porphyry sarcophagus, now in the Vatican, is also covered with boys or genii, gathering grapes, with other pagan symbols. This, and another sarcophagus, that of Helena, wife of Constantine, are almost the only specimens of Roman sculpture of that date. The figure of Christ appears over two of the doorways ; in one, as blessing two of the Apostles, and giving to one of them a scroll, bearing the words, "Dominus pacem dat : " two rivers issue from His feet, and lambs stand around Him. On the other side He is seated on a globe.

Among the most precious relics of early mosaics, are those still remaining of the series which once covered the ancient basilica of S. Maria Maggiore,

* See Gally Knight's 'Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy.' On S. Constantia. -

built by Sixtus III., to whose munificence were owing some of the most beautiful mosaics of the fifth century. Those to which we refer, fragmentary though they are—only the pictures of the chancel arch and the top walls having been preserved—are among the greatest treasures of early Christian art.* They fill the gap which would otherwise have existed between the semi-symbolic art of the age of Constantine, and the historic pictures of the age of Justinian, and are most interesting as showing the gradual development of religious art. Here are the earliest representations in historical order of Old Testament history; the Eternal Father hovering over His creation, and winged and white-robed angels fulfilling their mission to mankind. Here, too, are the earliest representations of the Evangelistic symbols existing in Rome, and one of the earliest pictures of the Annunciation; an angel floating down, accompanied by the dove, to the blessed Virgin, who sits between two angel guardians. In the Adoration of the Kings, the Holy Child occupies alone the central throne, the Virgin Mother standing behind Him;† a noticeable transition be-

* ‘*Historic and Monumental Rome*,¹ chap. xv. p. 660.

† This was most unjustifiably altered by Benedict XIV. (1740–1758), the Virgin being then placed beside the Child, and the standing figure behind changed into an angel.

tween the simple narrative picture of the Catacombs and the enthroned Madonna of the ensuing age. The idea of the special angelic guardianship of the Divine Child is beautifully carried out; three angels accompanying the Holy Family on their way to the temple, and the same number leading the Child on the way to Egypt. This grand old church* “seems to rise,” says Mr. Hemans, “like an embodied voice from Christian antiquity,

“‘A mighty minster, dim and proud and vast.’”

Important among the Roman churches, whose mosaics form a link between the first and second age of Christian art, is the once glorious basilica† of S. Paolo-fuori-le-mura, built by Theodosius (379–395), over the supposed tomb of the Apostle, and enriched with mosaics by his daughter Galla Placidia, and Leo the Great. The later series of mosaics, over the chancel arch, is remarkable for being the earliest transition type of our Lord’s face, the first recorded change, from the benign and beautiful ideal of youthful manhood, to the austere and forbidding aspect of the ‘*Rex tremendæ majestatis*.’ This change—which expressed so significantly the overclouding of

* ‘Historic and Monumental Rome,’ ch. xv. p. 663, note.

† It was nearly destroyed by fire in 1823. The plate of it in Mr. Gally Knight’s book is an interesting record of it.

the bright faith and hope of primitive Christianity, by the deepening morbidness which characterised the theology of the next five centuries—gradually darkened the primitive ideal of the Lord, till, by the dawn of the tenth century, the thought of redeeming love was lost in that of avenging justice, throughout the range of art.* An interesting record remains, in these same mosaics, of the great Pope, whose intercessions with the barbarians saved the Roman people from destruction—in an inscription over the arch, accompanied by his name—*Placidix pia mens operis decus homne (sic) paterni gaudet, pontificis studio splendere Leonis*. Here, too, we see again the Evangelistic symbols, this time with the nimbus; S. Peter and S. Paul are on each side below, and the four-and-twenty elders casting their crowns before the throne; twelve (in the original state of the mosaic) with veiled, and twelve with unveiled heads; emblems of the distinction between the prophets of the ancient Church, and the Apostles of the new revelation. The great bronze statue of St. Peter,† cast, it is said, from an ancient image of Jupiter, and erected by order of the same Pope,

* 'Historic and Monumental Rome,' chap. xv. p. 664.

† In S. Peter's basilica.

Leo I., probably to commemorate the deliverance of Rome from Attila, is worthy of mention, as being the earliest Christian statue remaining. It is of the fifth century, and is very classic in its lines and drapery. An inscription on the ancient basement,* referring to a bas-relief which ornamented it, ran thus: "Behold here God the Word (represented) in gold, the Divinely hewn Rock, treading upon which I do not totter;"† showing the interpretation by the early Church of that text, so insisted on by the Roman Church, in support of the Papal supremacy. SS. Cosmo e Damiano (circa 526) completes the link between the mosaics of the fifth and sixth centuries, and was begun shortly before Justinian reunited the Roman Empire under his rule. The mosaics of the apse represent SS. Cosmo and Damian offering the gem-set crowns of their martyrdom to the Lord. S. Peter and S. Paul are there in their traditionary types; and Felix IV., carrying his church, as founder. Here, too, are some of the last remnants of early symbolism, in the Phoenix and the palms, and, above all, in the twelve sheep on the frieze, standing around the Lamb on Mount Sion,

* The present basement is modern.

† 'Historic and Monumental Rome,' chap. xv. p. 665.

whence pour the waters of Paradise. "The Saviour's figure here," says Mr. Hemans,* "is one 'of the last examples, before the total decline in sacred art, of a truly noble and poetic ideal, instead of the sternly ascetic and repulsive, in the presentment of the sublime object. Majestically standing on bright clouds, clad in long garments (the Roman pallium and toga) of golden cloth embroidered with the mystic *Tau*, a scroll held in the left hand, whilst the right arm is extended in action that seems both to command and to bless—the countenance distinguished by solemnity and benign graciousness; the long hair, of dark auburn, falling in massive curls down the face and neck."

When the fifth century dawned, the doom of Rome, and Roman art, was very near. Three times the terrible Alaric stood before it, urged on by the voice which came to him by night, to "go and devastate Rome." The first time was in 408. They asked for terms, boasting of their immense population. "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mown," laughed the barbarian. "What ransom, then, would he take?" they inquired. "All your gold, all your silver, the choicest of all your treasures." "What then will you

* 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art,' chap. vii. p. 226.

leave us?"—"Your lives." So they melted down the statues of the ancient gods, and bought him off with the strange ransom of 5000 lbs. of gold, 30,000 of silver, 30,000 of pepper, 4000 vestments of silk and 3000 of scarlet cloth. The next year the Goths appeared again, this time insisting on appointing an emperor who should share the government with Honorius; and the third time, in 410, the fate of the beautiful city was sealed, and the gates of Rome opened to the advance-guard of those vast hordes which were destined to destroy the indescribable magnificence of the ancient Empire, and to swallow up the spoils of the wealth of kingdoms. All the treasures of the heathen temples, the wealth of the aristocracy, the spoils of centuries of conquest, were swept off, to disappear no man knows how or where. So the fabulous wealth of Rome, the "Nibelungen hoard," was won. And the Goths swept onwards, still going south, followed by their strange procession of waggons full of untold treasures, till they dispersed on the death of Alaric; and some turned into France, where, at Narbonne, long afterwards, in the sixth century, were found the emerald table,* set in frame

* Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' Milman's ed. vol. iv. chap. xxxi. p. 116. Also 'The Roman and the Teuton,' by Professor Kingsley, lect. iii. p. 95.

of pearls and gems, the 'missorium' or great golden dish, studded with jewels, and of exquisite workmanship, and all those jewelled treasures which sound, to modern ears, like the fairy land of the Arabian Nights.

But, happily for the Christians, this wild barbarian conqueror was yet a Christian, and he paused in awe before the churches of Rome, and, it is said, issued an edict to protect them. This, however, is doubtful, though the two great Basilicas of SS. Peter and Paul, were probably saved from sacrilege. The sacred vessels of S. Peter's, of immense value, had been entrusted to the care of a pious woman, whose house the barbarians entered, and demanded them. She displayed them, saying that she was unable to protect them, but warning the soldiers that they were sacred to the great Apostle. The invaders withdrew, and on the matter being told to Alaric, he ordered that the vessels should be escorted back to the Basilica by the troops. So they went, a quaint procession, to St. Peter's, followed by a multitude of Christian Romans, singing as they marched.

No actual record remains of that terrible sack. Over the awful scene of rapine and slaughter, which closed the history of heathen Rome, contemporaneous writers throw no light. Imperial Rome passes from our view as silently as the buried cities of Herculaneum and

Pompeii, and leaves no trace behind. And out of the ruins of the great capital, the Church arose triumphant, to claim a sovereignty which, as it gradually solidified itself, borrowed something of the character and spirit of the ancient empire. In a few years the city had recovered from the devastation of Alaric's invasion, and Christian Rome had arisen, rebuilt, from her ruins, and begun to gather again around her costly and beautiful treasures of art. But it needed a yet more terrible visitation than that of Alaric to purge the Church from the defilements of paganism which had crept within her, and which were so sapping the roots of her vitality, that S. Ambrose could say, that sometimes "he who came to the church a Christian, returned a pagan." In 455 Genseric marched on Rome with his Vandals, from Northern Africa, and, less merciful than Alaric, delivered over the unhappy city to slaughter and pillage; all that Pope Leo's intercession could save, being the three chief Basilicas, and the lives of those who fled there for shelter. Fourteen days did this terrible sack last, during which everything which had been preserved from the pillage of the Goths, and all the works of art which the Church had accumulated since the peace of Constantine, fell a prey to the avarice of the Vandals.*

* 'Decline and Fall,' vol. iv. chap. xxxvi. p. 257.

There were the golden table, and the seven-branched candlestick of the Jewish Temple, the roof of gilt bronze from the Capitol, the incalculable wealth of the imperial palace, and—more valuable than silver or gold—the statues of ancient Greece and Rome. Many were broken in pieces, and of these portions have been from time to time rescued from the ruins ; some were used to hurl on the invaders, and some, by far the greater part, were shipped off to Carthage, foundered at sea, and were buried in the ocean—fit grave for the last noble relics of a faith and a nation which thus passed from history.

The century of which we are writing, is one of the most terrible pages in European history ; and it is an evidence of the strong vitality of the Church, that she was able to raise her head so soon again in stateliness and beauty, after the devastating storm was over. Before the sixth century was over, the traces of the Gothic invasion had nearly disappeared from the churches of Rome.* The pious munificence of Pope Hilary alone (461–466) must have gone far to replace the pillage of the Vandals. A golden shrine on onyx columns, and a cross studded with jewels, for S. Croce ; a gold candelabrum of ten lights, and three silver stags,

* ‘ Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,’ chap. vii. p. 233.

for the Lateran Baptistery ; a silver tabernacle and golden dove for the altar of S. John, are only a few of his gifts. Other Popes, such as Symmachus (498–514), followed his example, in similar magnificent gifts of wrought gold and silver, which are recorded in the wonderful inventory of Anastasius. The devotion of sovereigns* contributed also to the restoration of the Roman churches ; Clovis, King of the Franks, sent a jewelled crown and golden paten, Ilderic the Vandal (circa 520), now a Catholic, gold and silver vessels, and Theodoric a silver cornice and candelabrum for S. Peter's.

It is a relief to contemplate one brief period in this disastrous epoch—the reign of Theodoric the Great (493–526). Brought up from childhood as a hostage at the court of Constantinople, he yet was not enervated by the splendour or the vice of that luxurious city ; and though refusing to be trained in the usual scholarship of noble Romans, he seems to have learned, with the genius of a man born to rule, all that was necessary to sustain the arts and sciences, as well as the laws, in his future empire. The traditionary portrait of the great Gothic hero and lawgiver has come down to us from history, unmistakably true ; long waving golden hair, falling over a

* ‘ Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,’ chap. vii. p. 233.

beardless face, and thick black eyebrows overshadowing deep, blue-grey eyes ; an ideal son of Odin—a king among the children of men. At once a conqueror and a civiliser, he strove to unite Teutonic vigour with Roman cultivation—to found a new kingdom, without destroying the prestige of the ancient empire. A barbarian, he purified the morals and manners of the most cultivated and refined city of the world ; a heretic, of an intolerant and persecuted sect, he enjoined and enforced religious toleration. Little is left us now of all his great works. He built and restored churches, halls, and palaces ; it seemed his delight to do so ; he adorned Verona and Ravenna, and, indeed, all the cities of his dominions, with buildings of all kinds. Two architects were always in his pay, one employed in repairing Roman buildings which had fallen into decay, strictly in accordance with the ancient architecture ; the other in constructing buildings at Ravenna. The remains of his magnificent palace, in the latter place, are still to be seen, and mark two progressive changes in the architecture of the period.* It is the first instance of small pillars, supported by brackets, having been used as decorations, and also of the appearance of windows

* See G. Knight on the palace of Theodoric.

divided by pillars ; and the usual square-headed door gives place in this building to the round arch. An image of his palace, in his beloved Verona,* too, has been preserved on a seal ; built on Roman arcades, with domes and minarets, like the buildings in the Eastern home of his early life. And at Ravenna there are many memorials of him, for it was his chosen home, intended by him to rival Rome in its beauty ; and it is there that we must look for the last remains of the Greco-Gothic era. In passing, either in thought or reality, through the silent, grass-grown streets of this city of the old world, it is to Theodoric and his beautiful and accomplished daughter Amalasuntha, that our thoughts and memories turn, though the mosaics of the Byzantine exarchs have taken possession of the walls he built, and Justinian and his wicked wife blaze, in purple and gold, from the churches reared by him. His monument, built by himself,† still stands entire. It is a round chapel, standing now amidst the quiet beauty of the woods, built on a decagonal base about thirty feet in

* 'Verona tua,' he called it. "Mr. Hallam (vol. iii. p. 432) observes that the 'image of Theodoric's palace' is represented in Maffei, not from a coin, but from a seal." See 'Decline and Fall,' vol. v. ch. xxxix. note to p. 22.

† It is generally asserted to have been built by Amalasuntha ; but this is a mistake. See 'Ecclesiologist,' vol. xxvii. p. 139.

diameter, the upper story or sepulchral chamber being also decagonal. The roof is a single block of Istrian limestone, full of encrusted fossils, hollowed to a thickness of four feet. An arcade once ran round it, on which stood twelve brazen statues of the twelve Evangelists, carried off to France by Louis XII. In a great sarcophagus,* long since destroyed, were placed the remains of the greatest man whom Rome had had to rule over her since the days of her ancient glory, or would see again for many a day. Had Italy listened to his wise and noble counsels—had she known in that her day the things which belonged to her peace—her history and the history of Western Christendom would have been different. As it was, his only reward from the people he had ruled so wisely, was the desecration of his last resting-place, and the ejection of his ashes from holy ground, because he had been a heretic. A mosaic of Theodoric at Naples had been falling down for some time, piece by piece, each crash marking the death of one of the great Amal race; now, about the time of Theodoric's death, the whole fell in, and the Romans said that the end of the dynasty had come. But the end of more than

* Not in the great porphyry vase, which once crowned the summit, and which, Mr. Gally Knight asserts, contained the heart of Theodoric.

the Ostrogothic dynasty had come; for the terrible Gothic war devastated the country once more, destroyed all Theodoric's noble works of art and civilisation, and obliterated the last faint shadow of the senate and the Roman people. Five times between the death of Theodoric and the accession of Justinian the ill-fated city was occupied by invading armies, stripped, and pillaged. When peace came again, the kingdom of Italy was no more, and Rome was Papal Rome and nothing else: "the eternal foe of Italian independence."

It is in the world-famous churches of Ravenna that the Christian art of the fifth and sixth centuries has chiefly come down to us, and that we see the high excellence which mosaic work had attained. It is there that we see the last efforts of the school which Constantine had so fondly hoped to nourish into life; there that Justinian left the chief memorials of his splendid reign; and there also are the Byzantine mosaics of a later age, with their stiff figures and drapery, and solemn faces set in gleaming backgrounds. It has been well said that "Ravenna has only one antiquity, and that is Christian."* Chosen by Honorius, in 404, as a home of luxurious retire-

* Cardinal Wiseman.

ment, where in effeminate idleness he could indulge the dream of being emperor of falling Rome, and calmly reflect, like Louis XV., that after him would come the deluge, it became from thenceforth the principal seat of government, throughout the shifting scenes of the next two hundred years. The cathedral and baptistery were built about 400, by S. Ursus, the bishop, a noble Sicilian, who devoted all his property to the enrichment of his beloved see,* and who first introduced mosaics into the city afterwards so renowned for its pictured walls; but the cathedral has been stripped of its beautiful mosaics, and almost entirely rebuilt.

The octagonal Baptistery is the only unaltered building in Ravenna, dating from the fourth century; and the mosaics were added by a successor of S. Ursus, about 430. On the cupola is a curious representation of the baptism of Christ, in which the river Jordan is personified by an old man with urn and reed—a remnant of the old pagan idea of the river-god. Below, the Apostles stand around the dome, dressed in tunics, with mitred heads and carrying crowns of leaves.

* 'History of Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' chap. x. p. 356.

About 440 was built the chapel, which was to serve as a resting-place, when her long and weary life was over, for the Empress Galla Placidia, the daughter, sister, and mother, of three of the last emperors of ancient Rome.* It was built in the form of the Latin cross, paved with rich marbles, and covered with mosaics, the only relic of the sovereignty of Rome, left undesecrated by Romans, or barbarians, or later Germans. Her sarcophagus is behind the carved altar of Eastern alabaster, and is of marble, originally covered with silver plates. There, embalmed, she sat in her imperial robes on a throne of cypress wood, in silent state, for more than a thousand years, and there might have been till this day, but for the carelessness of modern Roman custodians.† The sarcophagi of Honorius and Valentinian III. stand in the north and south corners of the chapel, and are covered with early Christian symbols. The four roofs are barrel-vaults, crowned in the centre with a brick dome, which is decorated with delicate and lovely mosaic. Beautiful arabesque patterns cover the blue ground, of which the cross forms the centre; the prophets standing below. Over the door is a beau-

* She was daughter of Theodosius, mother of Valentinian III., and sister of Honorius.

† The body was set on fire by some children at play, in 1577.

tiful picture of the Good Shepherd in blue mantle shot with gold, seated on a rock in the midst of a hilly landscape, the blue sky and green sward lighting up the scene. His left hand holds the cross, His right reaching forth to caress the lamb at His feet. Over the altar is our Lord again, this time with all the traditional attributes of majesty; the cross resting on His shoulder, and the open Gospel in His hand.* Equally grand, is the Chapel of the Archbishops of Ravenna, built by S. Peter Chrysologus (539-550), and used ever since without change or profanation. The walls are still lined with beautiful marbles, and the roof rich with lovely mosaics. It is built in the shape of a T cross. Conspicuous beyond all, and central everywhere, is the figure of our Lord, in boyhood, youth, and manhood; dressed, in the latter instance, in the costume of a Greek emperor, with gold tunic, and purple chlamys, the open Gospel in His hand: *Ego sum Via, Veritas et Vita*. Here, too, above the altar, is one of the earliest examples of a representation of the blessed Virgin; she wears a blue mantle, and has her arms extended in intercession.

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle's 'History of Painting in Italy,' vol. i. chap. i. p. 23.

In the centre of the vault is the sacred monogram supported by four great angels clothed in white, the evangelistic symbols around.

About two miles from Ravenna, in what was once the populous port of Classis, but is now a solitary marsh plain, stands the fine old Basilica of S. Apollinare. The church was built in honour of the first apostle of Ravenna (martyred under Vespasian, A.D. 74), under Justinian, and is a perfect specimen of the buildings of that age. The colonnades are formed of beautiful antique marble, surmounted with Corinthian capitals of the date of the building; the roof is of open rafters. The mosaics were probably added by Agnellus, Bishop of Ravenna (553-566), whose portrait, with that of his predecessor Maximianus, is among the medallions of the wall. Eight marble sarcophagi, covered with early Christian sculpture, monuments of archbishops of Ravenna, stand in the aisles, and above, from the walls, look down the portraits of all the prelates of that ancient see. On the apse, is the first representation in Italian art, of the subject of the Transfiguration.* A large Cross standing in the midst, with the Sacred Head in the centre, represents

* 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' vol. i. chap. x. p. 351.

our Lord ;* the heads of Moses and Elias rise out of clouds on each side ; Peter, James, and John, under the form of sheep, below. Underneath stands S. Apollinare in priestly vestments, his arms outstretched in prayer ; and the twelve Apostles, in the form of twelve more sheep, below him. Subjects from the Old Testament, cover the walls of the apse. A curious and interesting historical picture is also among these mosaics, of the young Justinian presented to Theodoric† by the Greek envoy. A bust of Christ, clad in purple mantle, is over the 'triumphal arch ;' the severe and melancholy features, showing the decline of the ideal of the Divine Face.

Not less celebrated is the octagonal church of S. Vitalis, one of Justinian's grandest churches ; and which, perhaps, owes something of its imposing effect to its Eastern character, borrowed from S. Sophia. Arcades of columns rise all round the nave, and support the dome, the chancel being built in an oblong, jutting out from the octagon. It was the first church in Italy built with a dome, the con-

* The cross, in early art, embodied the Second Person, as the dove the Third Person, in the Blessed Trinity. It was not merely the symbol, but the representation of Christ Himself, and thus placed in pictures, on the right hand of the Father.

† He was sent as a hostage to Theodoric in 497.

struction of which is very curious and unique. It is formed of a continuous series of earthen vase-shaped pots, the point of one in the mouth of another, covering the dome with spiral lines. These are covered with a hard cement, solidifying the whole, which forms altogether, a covering so impenetrable as to have defied all the attacks of time. The walls of the church are lined with beautiful marbles, the apse and cupola with mosaics, which, though showing the decline of art in their defective shading and outlines, are still very beautiful. The Lord is seated on a globe in the midst of the apse, in purple, gold-bordered vestments; S. Vitalis receiving his crown on one side, S. Ecclesius* with his church on the other. On the sanctuary walls are represented Abel and Melchisedech, offering bread and wine, in mystic allusion to the Eucharistic sacrifice; the sacrifice of Isaac, and appearance of the three angels to Abraham; Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the Evangelists, each with his symbol. The principal pictures on the walls represent the consecration of the church (547), and are among the most interesting memorials of early Christian art. There is the Emperor Justinian, in purple chlamys and embroidered tunic, holding his

* Archbishop of Ravenna. He died in 541.

offering, and surrounded by his courtiers; further on there is Maximianus,* Archbishop of Ravenna, in white vestments and pallium, and a priest and deacon, the one carrying the Gospel, the other a thurible, as for assisting at the celebration of the holy Eucharist. On the other side, is the Empress Theodora, in purple mantle and embroidered white robe, also carrying an offering in a bowl, and surrounded by the ladies of her court.†

Only one other example remains, of the portraits of Justinian and Theodora, and that, in the far-off Desert of Sinai, built by that emperor at the petition of the monks, who, "when they heard that he delighted to build churches and found convents," made a journey to beg him to build them a stronghold against the encroachments of the vagabond Arabs.‡ Here, in the

* The episcopal throne of Maximianus is also preserved in the cathedral. It is the largest and perhaps the most beautiful remaining specimen of ancient ivory. The back and sides are carved with the histories of our Lord and of Joseph, and the front panels with saints. The silver processional cross of S. Agnellus is also preserved here, and is a precious and beautiful relic of ancient metal work. In the middle, on one side, is a relievo of the Resurrection; on the other, the blessed Virgin, her arms outstretched in prayer, as always represented in early art. Heads of saints and of the prelates of Ravenna fill up the rest of the cross.

† For coloured illustrations of these mosaics, see Gally Knight's work.

‡ Dean Stanley's 'Sinai and Palestine,' chap. i. p. 51.

solemn wilderness, the massive walls, and gorgeous, banner-hung church, preserve a more unchanged memorial of Justinian, than all the magnificent churches and palaces of that Western empire, in which he thought to perpetuate the splendour of his reign.

S. Apollinare Nuova was built by Theodoric as a cathedral for the Arian bishops, and restored to the Catholics under Justinian, whose mutilated portrait is still to be seen in the organ loft. The mosaics were executed about 570, and are in some respects the most splendid example of that art remaining in Italy. They cover the walls above the nave arches, which are supported by twenty-four antique columns of grey Cippolino marble. Here we see, for the first time, the blessed Virgin enthroned in place of our Lord, guarded by four angels, and holding the Divine Child in her arms. The latter is dressed in white and gold; the former in purple robe and veil. From the west end, along one side of the nave, there issues, out of the port of Classis, a procession of female saints, headed by the Magi, who pass up, one by one, to cast their crowns before the throne; beside each saint a fruit-bearing palm. On the other side is a similar procession of male saints issuing from the palace of Theodoric. The following quotation from the letter

of a friend,* written at Ravenna, may give some idea of the glow of these mosaics:—"The colour would surprise you. There is so very little in the red or purple way; all is deep blue to yellow (gold mostly) through green; and there is every shade of perfect green, from bottle-green to bright emerald. White figures on gold grounds, with green palms and scarlet shoes and crowns—just points of red to give richness: that is *S. Apollinare Nuova*."†

We know but little of the methods used by the early Byzantines for ornamenting their windows, or to what extent coloured glass had superseded talc and alabaster, in the sixth century. Glass was probably sparingly used by the Romans for windows, and the large manufactories which were established in the neighbourhood of the city, chiefly produced ornamental vases, and other articles of luxury. These manufactories had been established by Tiberius, and had brought the art to a high state of perfection, which had probably declined by the time of Constantine, with all other arts in Rome. That emperor, however, extended his indefatigable energy to enlarging and increasing the manufactories, and after his

* The Rev. R. St. John Tyrwhitt.

† See also 'Christian Art and Symbolism,' lect. iii. p. 91.

time, glass was probably extensively used for church windows, though chiefly reserved for that purpose. Prudentius (348-413) has recorded an instance of coloured glass windows in a church of Constantine's, that of S. Paul's on the Ostian Way, the windows of which he describes as "shining like flowers in spring," and there are several other such allusions to be found, as in the writings of Fortunatus of Poitiers, the great church poet, in the seventh, and of Gregory of Tours, in the sixth century, showing the frequent use of glass in churches.* The thin slabs of alabaster which were at first used for filling the windows, were pierced with round holes, into which glass was fixed with stucco, and these, in course of time, were superseded altogether by plates of glass. In the time of Justinian, the pierced alabaster slabs were still in use, since one such window remains in S. Sophia. It is supposed that, when plates of glass were first used for windows, they were treated in the same way as had been the talc commonly used previously, viz. they were ornamented by designs drawn with finely powdered glass mixed with gum, the whole being fused together afterwards.†

* Labarte's 'Handbook of the Arts of the Middle Ages,' chap. ii. p. 66.

† 'Ecclesiologist,' vol. xxvi. p. 143.

The peculiar characteristic of the Byzantine churches is the dome.* This kind of roof had been used by the ancient Romans, but the art of constructing it had long been lost, and the revival of it by the Byzantines, and its introduction on a vast scale into ecclesiastical buildings, mark the beginning of a new era in art. The oblong of the basilica churches, became shortened so as to form, with the transept, an equal-armed cross, of which the dome was the centre. Thus was originated the difference between the Greek and Latin crosses; and each Church clung tenaciously, as their rivalry increased, to the peculiar forms of architecture which had been developed in the two capitals. The round-headed windows were also gradually enlarged, and divided by a small pillar, and light was admitted from the dome, of which S. Sophia was the first example. It was probably the original genius of the man whose name has come down to us as the architect of S. Sophia, Anthemius of Lydia, which first stamped the character of Byzantine architecture, and thus justified the theory that its era begins with the building of that magnificent church, which was considered to be the marvel of the age.

* Form derived first from the Catacombs. See Lord Lindsay. (ED.)

S. Sophia, * the cathedral of Eastern Christendom, dedicated to our Lord under the name of the Eternal Wisdom, was originally founded by Constantine, in the memorable year 325, that in which the Council of Nicæa was held. In the beginning of Justinian's reign it was burnt down and rebuilt. Twenty years later, the dome fell in and destroyed a great part of the church; and again the emperor energetically devoted himself to restore it to more than its former magnificence. A hundred skilled architects superintended the building; under each a hundred masons. The preparations took seven years, the actual building eight; the first consecration was in 537; the second in 561; and on the former occasion, the dedication festival was kept from Christmas Eve till the Epiphany. The emperor and his court went in state, and Justinian prostrated himself before the altar, saying, "God be praised. I have vanquished thee, O Solomon!"

How much the love and pride of the Eastern Christians centred in this beautiful church, we may gather from the legends which have circled around its history. The plan, it was said, was brought to the

* There is a very careful plan of this church in Neale's 'Introduction to the History of the Eastern Church,' vol. i. chap. iv. p. 234.

emperor in a dream, by an angel, who appeared again to the boy in charge of the tools, bidding him hasten the men to their work. Once the work lagged for lack of money ; and a third time the angel came, and, leading the mules away, sent them back laden with gold. Historians, poets, and antiquarians, have delighted to dwell on the splendour of this church, the glory of Eastern Christendom. A writer who saw it in its first beauty* enthusiastically described the maze of lovely colour produced by the various marbles.† There was the white Phrygian, touched with pink like the dawn of morning, the Libyan blue, and the Laconic green ; there was the black Celtic stone of the far West, and the starred porphyry and granite of Egypt ; the veined red and white Carian, the iron-fibred Carystian, the scarlet-flowered Lydian, and the golden Mauritanian ; there were the eight porphyry columns taken by Aurelius from the temple of the Sun at Baalbec, and the eight of green marble from the temple of Diana at Ephesus. The temples of Isis in Egypt, of the Sun at Heliopolis, of Pallas at Athens, and of Phœbe at Delos, were despoiled to make up the number—in all one hundred and four—of the columns supporting the

* Paul the Silentiary.

† Ibid. chap. ii. p. 248.

vast church. The tiles of the great dome were made at Rhodes, of a clay so light that twelve of them weighed no more than one of those ordinarily in use. In the building of the dome the tiles were laid down in dozens, the clergy around, singing hymns and prayers for the prosperity of the building, and laying a relic between each layer. On each tile* were inscribed the words—

“God has founded it, and it shall not be overthrown :
God will support it in the dawn of the morning.”

As the emperor hesitated whether to let in the light through one or two windows, it was told him in a dream, that the light should fall on the altar through three windows, in honour of the Blessed Trinity. Silver, as in the days of Solomon, was nothing accounted of, and the altar was literally to be more costly than gold alone could make it. It was composed of all the most precious things, welded together with gold and silver—a mass of pearls and emeralds and rubies. Above all rose the silver-gilt ciborium, with its cupola ornamented with golden lilies, and surmounted by a gold cross, brilliant with jewels. The patriarchal seats were of silver gilt ; the iconos-

* It was common to both Romans and Egyptians to mark their bricks and tiles with emblems suitable to their destination.

tasis * of exquisitely worked silver, with twelve twisted columns on each side of the door on the second stage; the ambon had a golden dais, and a cross encrusted with pearls and carbuncles.† The sacred vessels were of purest gold, and the altar linen, worked with jewels, numbered in all forty-two thousand articles. The Gospel books had golden covers, and a candelabrum of pure gold worked in vine patterns hung before the altar, immediately in front of which, was suspended the silver dove, containing the blessed Sacrament. The doors were of amber, ivory, and silver, and from the narthex gates of this

* Paul the Silentiary describes with great minuteness the wonderful beauty of this part of S. Sophia.

It may be well here to add that Paul the Silentiary was a wealthy patrician of Constantinople, who occupied the position of chief silentiarius, or secretary, to the Emperor Justinian. He wrote several poems, the chief of which was the famous description of S. Sophia in 1029 verses. Agathius, the historian, testified to its accuracy in these words:—"If any one who happens to reside in some place distant from the city, wishes to obtain a distinct notion of every part, as though he were there and looking at it, let him read what Paul the son of Cyrus the son of Florus has composed." See Smith's 'Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology,' vol. ii.

† I append, at Professor Ruskin's suggestion, a note regarding the species of carbuncle used by the Romans. Pliny's description of the *Carbunculi Amethystizontes*, exactly answers to our modern knowledge of a very fine species of garnet, called the Almandine Garnet, and now procured from Pegu. It is a beautiful stone of a deep purple red, and was, in all probability, the carbuncle so much used by the later Romans. See King's 'Antique Gems,' sect. i. p. 21.

church, are supposed to have taken their name the before-mentioned 'Silver Doors,' so designated by the Easterns. It was even proposed to pave the floor with gold, but eventually it was decided to use marbles. So, beginning at the sanctuary, flowing on in four great lines towards the four vestibules, were laid marbles waved in symbolism of the four rivers of the earthly paradise, or of those brighter streams which make glad the City of God. A jasper fountain played in the court, now, alas ! the 'Harem.' Of the mosaics, no description has come down to us ; and little remains from the fanaticism of the picture-aborring Mahometans save the four Cherubim in the four corners of the great dome. Some years ago, however, the Sultan caused such of the mosaics as did not represent figures to be uncovered. The coat of paint which covers even the great figure of our Lord on the cross, over the eastern apse, is so thin as to allow of the picture being seen from the gallery ; and the head of Justinian can be made out in the narthex. The fond tradition of the Eastern Christians preserves the prophecy that one day their beloved church will be restored to them, and again echo with the sounds of Christian worship : the crescent is waning, and the time may not be so very far distant. Legend tells how a priest was celebrating the Holy

Mysteries at the moment of the final catastrophe, when the Turks swarmed into the city. Suddenly, at his earnest prayer that the blessed Sacrament might not be desecrated, the wall of the sanctuary opened and received him ; and there, says the legend, he waits, till the day of retribution comes.

Such was the pattern of the churches of the second era of Christian art. Above, in the dimness of the solemn apse, symbol to the mystic Easterns of the dwelling-place of the Most High, sat the colossal figure of the Lord, sitting in His holy seat, or "reigning from the tree." Far as eye could reach, stood row on row, upon their shining grounds, the glorious company of the Apostles, and the noble army of Martyrs, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and from the heights of the dome—symbolic yet again of those "sublime heights," where, as one of their beautiful liturgies says, they "cease not to agitate their wings, and there is no end to the hymns"—Cherubim and Seraphim evermore looked down, the shimmer of their rainbow plumes lost in dim distance.

CHAPTER III.

THE LOMBARD CARVERS.

Invasion of the Lombards	..	..	..	..	A.D. 568
Overthrow of the Lombard kingdom by Charle-					
magne	..	..	..	..	774
Suppression of the Byzantine school by the destruc-					
tion of works of art under Leo the Iconoclast	..				726-754

FROM the heights of the Julian Alps, Alboin, king of the Lombards, looked down on the fruitful plains of Northern Italy, a mighty multitude behind him, eager to taste the fruits and reap the harvests with which Narses, exarch of Ravenna, had tempted them to come to his aid ; longing, after all their wanderings, like the Israelites of old, for that Palestine of the Northern tribes, that "land of oil, olive, and honey," of which their fathers had told them. No army was in the field, no husbandmen in the vineyards, no busy hum of life in the villages—only a great solitude—when the Lombard race came down from the mountains and claimed their share of the sweet Southern land as an inheritance for ever. So they came and none said

them nay; and "the corn was springing self-sown under the April sun, the vines sprouting unpruned, the lucerne fields unmown, when the great Lombard people flowed into that waste land, and gave to it their own undying name." * They were a Scandinavian race who had settled in Pannonia, a province close to Venetia, separated only by the long line of the Alps. They swarmed into Italy with wives and children and barbarian allies, an innumerable multitude, and, ere six months were over, had established themselves in Northern Italy. The only city Alboin took with his sword was Pavia, which he entered in triumph after a three years' siege, and made the capital of the Lombard kingdom. They seem to have been a rude, rough race, formidable to look at with their long shaggy hair and beards, but simple-minded and generous; and they were governed by a just and humane code of laws which enforced the claims of liberty and honour. The bitter complaints of Gregory the Great concerning their savage manners and excesses must be accepted with some reservation.† Cruelty was not a special characteristic of the Lombards, though they shared in the vices of other savage

* Kingsley's 'Roman and the Teuton,' p. 191.

† 'Latin Christianity,' vol. ii. chap. vii. p. 133.

nations. Their wild passionate nature is typified by the weird story of Rosamond's terrible revenge, when Alboin had made her drink out of her father's skull. Their religion was probably a mass of vague, floating superstition, for they had but recently given up their Odin worship, and some of them even were still idolaters. Like all the Gothic converts to Christianity, they were Arians, and Gregory, though beyond many of the prejudices of his age, hated heretics with an indiscriminating hatred. Moreover, although the Lombards soon showed themselves tolerant in their religion, their first acts towards the Roman Church were hostile, and the orthodox bishops were obliged to give place to Arian prelates.*

The Lombards seem to have been good workmen from the first, and brought with them, according to their historian, Paul the Deacon, great skill in hammer-work—an art with which most of the Northern tribes were acquainted. They soon began to acquire a knowledge of building also, and when they found themselves among the Italian marbles, and saw the fair buildings of Theodoric and Justinian, the spell of them came over the rude Norsemen, and they could not choose but carve. And their work, rude though it

* 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' chap. xi. p. 418.

might be, was filled from the first with that vigour of thought, and "science of expression," which have made the Lombards famous to all time, as the founders of Gothic sculpture, the masters and teachers of the Pisan school, and, through that, the inspirers of Italian art. With the Lombard invasion begins a new era; and Byzantine art becomes a thing of the past, to be associated with the history of a waning empire; prolonged chiefly as an expression of the pride of Eastern despots, or of the narrowness of Eastern theologians. There is little difference, at first, in the actual subjects of Byzantine and Lombard art, and, in fact, all early nations have much the same arrangement of leaf and animal life, in their drawings and carvings. It was the life, and energy, and fire, of the Lombard character which was contrasted with the phlegmatic, contemplative, and now enervated Byzantine elements. The Lombard animals are "all alive; hungry, fierce, and wild, with a life-like spring.* The Byzantine birds peck idly at the fruit, and the animals hardly touch it with their noses. The Cinquecento birds, in Venice, hold it up daintily, like train-bearers; the birds in the earlier Gothic peck at it hungrily

* 'The Stones of Venice,' vol. i. appendix 8, p. 362.

and naturally ; but the Lombard beasts grip at it like tigers, and tear it off with writhing lips and glaring eyes."

"Like a wild north wind" came down this "indraught of the Lombard energies upon the Byzantine rest ;" * vivifying its stately forms and monotonous ideas, and at length transforming them into noble and vital art. Let us not undervalue Byzantine art. It inherited from the Greeks an exquisite perception of dignity and grace, in line and form, which made its best productions models of refined taste ; its loveliness of colour was peculiarly its own development, and the rigidity which petrified it, was the result of that same unchanging religion which produced it. It was the embodiment of the profound and solemn faith of Eastern Christendom. That order of mind which so delighted in speculative philosophy ; which found for the ascetic spirit of monasticism, a congenial home, such as it never made amidst the practical, active life of Western Europe ; whose representative great men were profound theologians like S. Augustine, not active powers like Leo the Great, or Ambrose of Milan, could not long harbour the restless spirit of art. The mind which is formed and accustomed to meditate con-

* Ibid. p. 359.

tinually on abstract dogmas, and whose only ideal of a perfect service of God, is that of a life isolated from all human thoughts and passions, is, in its proportion to the attainment of its ideal, unable to rejoice in the thoughts of other men concerning the works of God in this lower world. The ideal perfection of religious art, from the point of view of those trained in this contemplative theology, might require, indeed, that the best, and costliest, and loveliest, of all things should be dedicated to the worship of God ; but the dim thoughts of other men, concerning the God of their daily life, would have small sympathy with them. The religion of common life, the faith which tries to read, through the mist of things it sees, the mysteries of things unseen, would in its expression even jar on them. And in the age of which we are writing, the undisciplined, half formed thoughts of the untrained Northern imagination, finding expression in pagan symbolism and weird grotesque forms of art, would be a thing incomprehensible to the Eastern character.

But, as we have said, a new era of art began with the Lombards, and, the old order ended, it was given to this wild Northern tribe to lay anew the foundations of Christian art. To the good Queen Theodolinda (590-615) belongs the honour of converting her race to Catholicism. A devoted daughter of the Church, she encouraged the religious art of Italy more than

any one in that dark age. It was to her that S. Gregory addressed his 'Dialogues,' and also sent, as an acknowledgment of her services to the Church, among other gifts, the celebrated Iron Crown used at the coronations of the emperors of Germany, from Otho III. to Charles V. That she encouraged painting, we know, and that in her palace at Monza she caused to be executed a series of historical pictures, representing the achievements of the Lombard race. She also built a fine cathedral at Monza, dedicated to the favourite saint of her race, S. John Baptist ; and although this was entirely rebuilt in the thirteenth century, there still remains over the porch some sculpture of the date of the early basilica. The first artistic record of the race who alone among the Gothic conquerors of Italy have left their abiding impression on its soil, these interesting carvings show us that the genius of their art was historic from the first. One of the two groups represents the Baptism of Christ, an angel holding His garments, SS. Peter and Paul on each side with their emblems of keys and sword, another apostle with a scroll, and the blessed Virgin. The dove hovers over our Lord, holding a vase from which the water pours on His head, and there is the curious addition, from the ritual of Catholic baptism, of the chrism ; S. John anointing the forehead of our Lord from a vase.

Above is a historic group. Theodolinda kneels on one side, offering a crown and cross to S. John Baptist, symbolic of her gifts to the cathedral; her husband Agilulph is on the other side, and Adeloald their son, and Gundeberga their daughter, complete the group. Agilulph wears the loose linen garments which Paul the Deacon mentions, "such as English Saxons are wont to wear,"* and has the long flowing hair and beard, from which the Lombards or Longobards are said to derive their name. The Iron Crown was sent to Theodolinda on the occasion of the baptism of her son. It is a golden circlet, about three inches wide, set with sapphires, emeralds, and rubies, in the interior of which is set the narrow iron fillet, made out of one of the nails of the cross, which gives its name to the crown. Here are also the crowns of Agilulph and Theodolinda; the former having figures of our Lord, the apostles, and angels, most interesting as the earliest specimens of Lombard metal work; it has sixty-five gems set within it, and bears engraved around it the epigraph containing the proud title of Agilulph, king of Italy. Theodolinda's Gospel book is also preserved here, bound in

* See 'Art Teaching of the Primitive Church,' by the Rev. R. St. John Tyrwhitt, chap. x.

gold and set with jewels and intaglios ; and also a crystal cross, said to have been presented to her at the same time as the crown. The vessels for holy oil are no less interesting, on one of which is a remarkable representation of the crucifixion, so rare a subject, as yet, in art. The Lord's head is in the midst, the thieves on each side having their arms extended, but without crosses ; and below is a budding cross beside which two figures kneel. On another of these vessels is a figure of the Lord clothed in a long robe and with arms extended, but also without the cross. A more historical working out of this subject is on the reliquary in the same collection, which has our Lord crucified, also clothed in a long robe ; S. John and the blessed Virgin on each side, and two soldiers mocking Him. Rebuilding and additions have transformed the few remaining monuments of the period of the Lombard dominion, so that it is difficult to find examples of their early work. Various dates have been at different times ascribed to the beautiful little octagon Baptistery of Florence. It was built from the ruins of a temple of Mars, which once stood on the spot, and, in fact, is so entirely composed of ancient materials, as to have been considered, by Villani and others, to be that temple itself. Others have ascribed it to Justinian, to Theodolinda, and to

later Lombard sovereigns.* But although capitals, columns, and pilasters, belong to a bygone classic age, we may see tokens of the science of building, and power of adaptation, which were parts of the genius of the Lombard architects; and the beautiful intarsio pavement, though restored several centuries later; has retained much of the strange, weird symbolism of the race. S. Michele, at Pavia, generally considered to be of the pure Lombard style of the seventh century, was rebuilt† in the tenth century. But whether a copy of the ancient basilica, or merely retaining the chief features of the ancient Lombard style of decoration, it is one of the most interesting of early Italian churches. Transepts are here added to the old basilica form, a cupola rises at the intersection, and a *triforium*, or gallery, runs on each side of the nave, over a colonnade of grand and massive pillars. The capitals are decorated with grotesque figures of men and animals, twined in and out of each other, like the Scandinavian art from which they were in fact derived. Pagan and Christian emblems are mixed up together in inextricable confusion, cut in bold relief on the rough

* No; it is Etruscan work of pure descent. (ED.)

† Churches were often rebuilt with their original sculptures; I believe many in this church to be Lombard. (See next page.) (ED.)

sandstone. David and Goliath, Theseus and the Minotaurs, syrens and angels, mingle together with the signs of the zodiac—last remnant of the world-wide sun worship—and well known to us in our Northern work. They loved the vine-leaf too—these inheritors of the sunny Italian vineyards—and twined it, again and again, over their work at S. Michele. The increase of external ornament is also a noticeable feature of this and other Lombard churches, ornamental arcades being added to the walls, and sometimes extending along the entire building. The fine Basilica of S. Ambrogio at Milan, built in the middle of the ninth century, shows the gradual fading away of the monstrous and savage element in Lombard art. It, too, was rebuilt in the twelfth century, but retained many of the features of the ancient church. The atrium—remarkable both for its perfect preservation and as being one of the few remaining specimens of this part of an ancient basilica—the columns of the nave, the bronze doors, the crypt, and the beautiful baldachino and altar-case, are all of Lombard work. The capitals of the massive square piers of the atrium, are covered with symbolic figures, mingled with foliage, birds, and animals. The altar canopy is a genuine work of the ninth century, supported on porphyry columns. The

inside of the cupola is powdered with gold stars; on the front space the Lord sits enthroned, giving the keys to S. Peter and the Gospel to S. Paul; at the back is S. Ambrose with his disciples; two other groups on the sides. There is a dawning of true life and feeling in these sculptures, though a Byzantine stiffness still hangs about the draperies. The magnificent altar-case is still more precious, as one of the rare pieces of metal work of this date.* Plates of gold form the front, silver gilt the sides and back; and the compartments are divided by jewel-set strips of enamel. The embossed pictures represent scenes from the Bible and from the life of S. Ambrose, delicately worked, and showing that the hand of the Lombard metal-workers had not lost their cunning, among the marble quarries of Italy.† The mosaics of the apse are also of this century, and in one of the pictures there, of S. Ambrose celebrating, we may note, as Mr. Hemans remarks,‡ the simplicity of altar furniture in a church of this date; a cross, chalice, and Gospel scroll only, standing on the small unpretending altar at which he stands, vested in his simple alb and chasuble.

* It was presented by Angelbertus, archbishop of Milan, in 835.

† The name of the artist, Wolfinus, shows his Gothic origin.

‡ 'Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art,' chap. vi. p. 305.

One of the chief characteristics of Lombard work,* is an untiring, childish love of jest, sometimes finding vent in mere ludicrous ugliness, often sinking into morbid moods, which loved to dwell on distortion and pain ; often, again, flashing into a noble symbolism, and showing the undercurrent of powerful imagination in the race. Out of this higher kind of grotesque, the effort to express truths too great to be adequately represented by the outward forms which shadow them, arose all noble Gothic art. The 'Veronese griffins,' supporting the pillars of the porch, in the Lombard church of S. Zenone, at Verona, and known to all the readers of 'Modern Painters,'† are a noble example of this symbolic art, in its earlier stage. As the symbolic guardian of the temple, the throne, and the tomb—sleepless, vigilant—the lion has ever been regarded in the art of all ages and countries ; alike in the barbaric grandeur of Egyptian halls, the splendour of Solomon's palace, and the refinements of Grecian temples. Watcher of hidden treasure, the griffin, mingled lion and eagle, had its recognised meaning, in the symbolism

* See 'Stones of Venice,' vol. i. appendix 8. Also 'Art Teaching of the Primitive Church,' by the Rev. R. St. John Tyrwhitt, chap. x. p. 264.

† 'Modern Painters,' vol. iii. part iv. chap. viii. p. 106.

of pagan, as of Christian worship ; that meaning but transformed into a deeper significance by the mysticism of early Christianity. Watcher, indeed, now, of buried treasure, more precious than gold or silver ; treasure of priceless value, destined to shine in the crown of the Lord of Hosts, in the day when He makes up His jewels. Nor did the symbolism end here. Uniting the two sacred emblems of the lion and the eagle, the griffin has always been the received representation of Incarnate Divinity ; the lion symbolising the human, the eagle the Divine nature. A deadly serpent lies crushed in the firm, lion-like grasp of this Lombard griffin ; and, just seen under his eagle's wings, and marking the thoughts of the carver, are the wheels of the mystic vision of Ezekiel.* Not without intent either, did the builder of S. Zenone place his conception on each side of the porch. "The earth is weak, I bear up the pillars of it," is the suggested thought of the rough-hewn supporters of S. Zenone. They bear up the pillars of the earthly temple, and in their place shadow forth, to all time, the fundamental doctrine of the Catholic faith.

Words are but the conventional, limited signs of the facts they convey to us, and the greatest

* Ibid. p. 112.

poem the world has seen, wrapped its teaching in profound allegory. So also, as religious art is the inadequate means of conveying truths before which the angels veil their faces, the symbolism of the early ages was the outcome, not of weakness, but of power of thought,* and arose from an intense conviction of the greatness of the facts which it was the high mission of art to teach. And it is just because, in the later centuries of the Christian era, and in our own age almost entirely, men have lost sight of the fact, that reverent restraint is fitting when mortals tread on holy ground, and the veil of suggestive symbolism a truer and deeper reality than mere narrative, that religious art is a thing of the past. That which is above and beyond human conception, cannot be adequately embodied in a form of expression more limited even than the human soul which prompted it. The revolution begun by Raffaele, in his substitution of dramatic scenes, gesticulating attitudes, and impossible surroundings, for the traditions he learned in the school of Perugino, has ended in the vulgar painting, the sentimental prints, and the coloured statuettes, which have made the religious art of the nineteenth century a

* 'Stones of Venice,' vol. iii. chap. iii. p. 154. On the Grotesque Renaissance.

byword for its feebleness on the one side, its superstition on the other.* Not without reason did an ancient council forbid excommunicated persons to presume to paint those sacred incidents which, they rightly thought, could only be set forth by men impressed with a sense of the depths of the mysteries thereby conveyed. "He who occupies himself with the things of Christ must ever dwell with Christ," was a favourite saying of the saintly Angelico, than whom none ever impressed more vividly on other men's minds, the faith which was to him, in very truth, the substance of things not seen.

Imitation is not the principal function, nor technical skill the chiefest faculty, of art; nor do we, in truth, measure an artist's greatness by such a standard, but rather by his grasp of great thoughts, and power of communicating them to others. The particular function of religious art, is the expression of man's adoring faith in God's revelation, and the suggestion of thoughts, or inspiration of emotions concerning it. It is needless to dwell on the difference of the two types; it is vain to compare them. The *Madonnas* of Francia and John Bellini, solemn, calm, and ineffably sweet; the action, whatever it be,

* Excellent; but my good scholar has not distinguished vulgar from non-vulgar naturalism. Perhaps she will as I read on. (ED.)

(See note to page 96.)

entirely religious in its meaning; framed in setting of gold, or of soft blue sky and flower-spread turf; surrounded, it may be, by the adoring faces of those who have won palm-branch, lily, or golden crown, through that example of great humility. And, on the other hand, the buxom matrons of Rubens and Vandyke, or the peasant groups of Caracci; the scene dramatised, the mystery degraded into a delineation of an incident of vulgar* life, the thought levelled to the composition of the painting. To the first of these schools, indeed, the actions of our

* 'Modern Painters,' vol. iii. part iv. chap. iv. Of the False Ideal.

Professor Ruskin reminds me that I have not defined vulgarity in art. I think I cannot do better than take his own definition that "Vulgarity is in the concealment of truth, or in affectation." There is no vulgarity in a whole truth, however commonplace. The highest ideality is consistent with the fullest naturalism, as in many of Botticelli's pictures, or as in Hunt's 'Finding of the Saviour in the Temple.' Again, as regards actual life, there is not, necessarily, any more vulgarity in a poor man's hut, than in a nobleman's hall, nor does the nobility of a picture depend in any degree on such choice of scene, but on its motive and choice of thought. The insipid sentimentality of Raffaele, and the coarseness of the later Italian and Dutch painters were in no wise due to the one having chosen the study of a contadina for the Mother of Christ, or the other the surroundings of a poor cottage as the scene of the Lord's Nativity. It was their incapacity to see that an affected, attitudinised girl was an unfit ideal for the Mother of Christ, and that the character and habits of a low-lived peasantry were inadequate forms in which to clothe the story of the Incarnation, which marked their work indelibly with the stamp of vulgarity;—the vulgarity of minds capable of approaching familiarly the most ineffable subjects, without being detained by awe, or inspired by love.

Lord were not ordinary actions, done in time ; but living facts, objects of adoring contemplation to every age and generation, each containing its own spiritual lesson, above and beyond the actual fact. And so, if in the pictures from Cimabue to Angelico, the garments of the saints were woven in texture and colour such as the peasant Maiden of Nazareth, and the fishermen of Galilee, donned never on earth, even the more were the minds of the beholders carried on to the rainbow-girt throne, and the crystal sea, and the golden harps and crowns of those who, having so closely followed the Son of Man on earth, now follow Him in His glory, whithersoever He goeth. "Thus," said the old painter-theologians, "you shall learn the true rank of those simple ones, taken out of the dust, and lifted out of the mire, but now set for ever among the Princes of the people in Heaven."

In connection with the symbolic treatment of religious subjects by the Lombards, it seems not out of place here, to notice an important branch of art in the middle ages—that of crucifixes. There are two distinct methods of representing this subject ; the mystical, and the realistic ; and although these were sometimes united by artists of the middle ages—and, when so united, the representation

is perhaps most perfect as an ideal—yet the two schools of thought are distinct in Art. The first step towards the contemplation of the Passion, was in half symbolic pictures, such as that on the reliquary of Monza. This was towards the close of the sixth century ; to which period also belongs the earliest remaining picture of the subject, treated historically.* In this picture our Lord is nailed to the cross vested in a long purple robe, the thieves being crucified on each side. The holy women stand by the cross, while a soldier offers the hyssop, and the centurion pierces the side of Christ ; at the foot of the cross, the soldiers cast lots for the coat. It is impossible here, to trace the rise, and gradual increase of the use of the crucifix. A council of Constantinople, in 692, enjoined the historical representation of our Lord, as preferable to the symbolic, and this gave the impetus to the use of images and crucifixes, although it does not seem probable, from the testimony of early art, that the crucifix was substituted for the cross as a usual part of altar furniture, until several centuries after this. It was, however, ordered by the Second Council of Nicæa, that images and crucifixes should be exposed in churches and public worship, and the

* In a Syriac evangelistarium now in the Laurentian Library at Florence. See frontispiece to the 'Art Teaching of the Primitive Church.'

general use of these symbols may perhaps therefore be said to date from this. Even then, the reverential awe of the sacredness of the sufferings of the cross, caused a reticence in the treatment of the subject, which was not finally broken through, until the eleventh century,* when the idea of the Agony and Death becomes familiar in art. A painting of the Crucifixion, in the subterranean church of S. Clemente, which Mr. Hemans ascribes to the tenth century, may perhaps be the earliest instance of the figure of our Lord being represented as dead; but this picture may be of later date. In all early pictures of the Crucifixion, our Lord's face and attitude are calm and painless, and the eyes are open; and it is this alteration which marks the great change in the ideal.

The culminating point to which the emotional school reached, was in the painting of Fra Angelico, of whom even, we may venture to think, that his unapproached spirituality, and high-strung devotion, would have found a nobler expression in a less material ideal. Originating in the wish to arouse in men's minds devotion to the great act of Re-

* Mr. Hemans gives a MS. of about 1059 as the earliest instance of our Lord being represented as dead on the cross. 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' chap. xiii. p. 533.

demption, this realistic type of art in fact appealed to their lower emotions, and found its end in adoration of the symbol, rather than in spiritual contemplation of the Divine object. The reserve of the earlier art, was, however, sooner and more irretrievably overstepped in sculpture than in painting; for sculpture is governed by sterner laws, and it is more fatally easy for it to fall from the imaginative level which is its only safeguard, into the materialism to which the study of form inevitably tends.

Few remaining crucifixes are earlier than the fourteenth century, and of these, the one called the 'Holy Face of Lucca,' carved in cedar-wood and decorated with gold and jewels, is supposed to be the oldest. The figure is vested in a long albe with embroidered border; the head is crowned, and the sandalled feet rest on a chalice.* It is said that this image has been preserved at Lucca since the eighth century;† and whether this be true or not, there seems no reason to doubt that it was placed by Alexander II. (1061-1073) in the cathedral on the occasion of its consecration. The crucifixes of S. Trinità, Florence, S. Dominic, Naples, of Siena Cathe-

* In allusion, probably, to the legendary 'Sangrail,' which was the cup held by Joseph of Arimathea at the foot of the cross.

† See Hemans' 'Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art,' chap. vi. note to p. 295.

dral, and the crowned and robed figures of Amiens and Toulouse,* are perhaps the only others existing in Western Christendom, which have any claim to antiquity. That the custom of placing crucifixes in public places was established by the eighth century is, however, testified by the fact that the destruction of the one which stood over the gate of the emperor's palace at Constantinople, was the signal for the Iconoclastic outbreak.

The vested figure is a sure evidence of antiquity in any representation of this subject;† and this type was probably common to both Lombard and Byzantine art; the universal expression of the reverence of early Christendom. Mrs. Jameson gives a curious legend,‡ showing the feeling of the Eastern Church on the subject. A priest, after exhibiting to the people a crucifix vested only with a waist-cloth, had a vision, in which the Lord said to him, "All ye go covered with various raiment, and Me ye show naked; go and cover Me with clothing." The priest, not understanding the command, took no heed to the vision. On the third

* These two are supposed to be of the tenth century. See Viollet-le-Duc's 'Dictionnaire de l'Architecture.' There is also a crucifix in the Cluny Museum, thought to be of the twelfth century.

† 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art,' chap. xiii. p. 534.

‡ The same story is told by S. Gregory of Tours (sixth century) as relating to a priest at Narbonne.

day, the Lord appeared again and scourged him, saying, "Have I not told you to cover Me with garments? Go now and cover with clothing the picture in which I appear crucified."

We have dwelt on the difference between the two types, because the change of the feeling of Christendom on this subject, marks a period in the history of religious art, and represents the introduction of the historical mode of representation, the union of which with the symbolism of ancient tradition, produced all the noble Gothic art of Europe. We may perhaps be permitted, in conclusion, to make a brief protest in favour of that earlier ideal, which had for its dominant object the teaching of the eternal priesthood and kingdom of Christ,* rather than the arousing of fictitious emotion. "Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord reigneth from the Tree," † said David.

* A picture does actually exist in a MS. of the thirteenth century embodying this idea. Our Lord stands, not transfixed to the cross, vested in albe, dalmatic, and chasuble, and with the crown on His head.

† An ancient reading of Psalm xcvi. 10. The words are not now in any version of the Psalter. S. Justin Martyr declares (*Dial. c. Tryph.* 73) that to his knowledge they were in the Hebrew text in his time, but had been just cut out by the Jews, along with some other passages in Ezra and Jeremiah, as too favourable to Christianity. The words are quoted by Tertullian, Lactantius, S. Cyprian, and S. Augustine; but S. Jerome could not find them in any Hebrew MSS. he consulted. I am indebted for this note to the kindness of Dr. Littledale.

That the idea was familiar to the mind of the mediæval Church, is

A king alike on the cross or on the throne, with royal diadem they would crown Him ; a priest for ever by virtue of that act of sacrifice, in seemly vesture should He be clothed, wrought about with divers colours ; One with the Father on His throne, they would dwell rather on the unchangeable peace of the Godhead which knew no battle, than on the mortal weakness of the assumed humanity which won the victory.

Few memorials remain in Italy, of the period succeeding the fall of the Lombard dynasty. The ninth century dawned on Charlemagne, as the newly crowned emperor of the West, whose name is associated with a bright revival of art and letters. Crowned and anointed with splendid rites at S. Peter's Basilica, his reign was inaugurated by the presentation of magnificent offerings to the chief churches of Rome ; to S. Peter's, a silver altar, a golden corona studded with jewels, and other ornaments ; to the Lateran Church, a jewelled cross, silver baldachino, and gold-bound Gospel book. Nor were the Popes of this period, behindhand in liberality. Adrian I. (772-795) devoted his wealth and energies to the restoration and decoration of the Roman churches ; and we read in Anastasius, of silver baldachinos and confessions, of

evidenced by the well-known ' *Vexilla Regis* '—one of the finest hymns of Western Christendom—which is founded on this verse. It was written by Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, at the beginning of the seventh century.

jewelled vessels, and golden statues, and precious embroideries. Mosaic, glass-painting, and illumination, all shared in the revival, and numbers of workmen were employed in the manipulation of precious metals and stones, among which latter material, the beautiful *lapis lazuli* first came into use.* Almost the only church retaining features of this period, is SS. Nereo and Achilleo, rebuilt by Leo IV. (795-816), and the beautiful inlaid chancel-screens,† choir pavement, and baldachino, are almost unchanged.

Of the time of Adrian I. is the interesting subterranean Basilica of S. Clemente, to which so much attention has been called lately. In 790, this Pope built the church over the ruins of a fourth-century basilica, following closely the plan of the ancient building ; so that we have, in this eighth-century church, an exact type of an ancient basilica. The beautiful choir-screens, ambons, and Gospel candelabrum, were brought up from the sunken church, when, in the twelfth century, another church was again built over this one, and are to be seen in the upper church to this day.

The impulse which Charlemagne gave to art, also showed itself in the multiplication of churches and

* 'Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' chap. xii. p. 435.

† It is one of the earliest examples of that inlaid stonework, which first began to be used in this period.

campaniles, some of the latter of which still remain in Rome, as monuments of a period of which most of the artistic glory has passed away. Terra-cotta ornaments, inlaid marbles, and external mosaics, began now to give a hitherto unknown brilliancy to Italian architecture. The Northern and Eastern elements of art were beginning to meet in the South, and Lombard, Arab, and Greek, were all unconsciously giving their respective shares to inspire the genius of Italian art.

The tenth century was a period of darkness and degeneracy, both in art and morals. The clergy had sunk very low, intellectually and morally, and the laxity of discipline, together with the numerous disasters which had weakened the prestige and authority of the Church, tended also to deaden its vital powers. There was distress, and violence, and bloodshed, all over Europe, and men's minds fastened morbidly, on the prophecy of an unknown hermit, that the end of the world was at hand. It may be imagined how disastrous the effect of this universally accepted prophecy was, to all social order and progress; for, if the year 1000 was to close the history of the world, the preservation of existing institutions was useless. "Seeing that the end of the world is approaching,"* was a frequent form with which wills

* 'Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art,' chap. ii. p. 42.

and bequests were headed. As a natural consequence of this unhealthy depression, the minds of men began to dwell on the wrath of God, and the terrors of the Judgment Day. To this century, or only a few years later, belong the paintings of the church of Torcello, among which is the earliest existing example of the tremendous subject of the Last Judgment, in the annals of Christian art. But with the dawn of the eleventh century faded away the panic which had possessed the Christian world. Again splendour of gold and silver and jewels blazed in the deserted and decaying sanctuaries, and cathedrals sprang up all over Italy, among which were the famous ones of Siena, Lucca, Pisa, and Venice.

The Iconoclastic troubles require some short notice here, as having been the cause of the supreme and final schism between Eastern and Western art.

The causes which led to the extraordinary revolution which, in the eighth century, convulsed Eastern Christendom, and destroyed, as totally as did the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century in the West, all the monuments of art which had been accumulated from earliest ages, cannot here be discussed. In the year 726, Christendom was suddenly astounded by an edict from the Emperor Leo, prohibiting the

reverence of images of our Lord and the saints, followed shortly after by another edict, commanding the destruction of all such images, and the whitewashing of the walls of churches.

That such a tremendous blow could have been struck at the very heart of the worship of the Eastern Christians, shows the absolute power which was wielded by the emperor in religious matters, and the subordinate position held by the Church, within the imperial jurisdiction. No reactionary idea of a spiritual religion had taken root in the popular mind, as was the case previously to our own Reformation ; no principle of Puritanism possessed the religious laity of the generation which saw and submitted to this revolution. External incentives to devotion were even more necessary to the sensuous Oriental character, than to the calmer temperament of the Western nations. The people clung, with one heart and mind, to the religious representations which had been their unquestioned inheritance from the days of Constantine. Dr. Milman has called it "a premature Rationalism,"* a fanaticism without a religious principle. It is equally difficult to conjecture the motives of the emperor, in issuing this tyrannical and un-

* 'Latin Christianity,' vol. ii. book iv. chap. vii.

popular edict. It may be,* that in the mountain home of his youth, in Isauria, he had become tainted with the doctrines, and caught the fanaticism, of that Mahometan sect which was just growing into dangerous vitality. It is scarcely credible* that, had he been really a Christian, he would have persecuted the clergy, and desecrated the churches throughout his dominions, in spite of the continual revolts of the people, the animosity of the bishops, and the remonstrances of the Pope.

Dr. Milman, in his chapter on Iconoclasm, has dwelt on the difficulties attending the imagery of sacred persons and things, and propounded the question, how far a spiritual development of Christianity can be reconciled with, and assisted by, material symbols. He has left his own question unanswered, and as a problem for the future to solve ; yet he has recorded his opinion that, in the increase of civilisation, art must either break off entirely from the religion which has inspired her noblest creations, or again assert her claims as a teacher of truth. The difficulty, however, as regards the future of art, lies deeper than this. No vital school of art has ever

* What does it matter what may be, or what is scarcely credible ? I hope the reader will consider what a waste of time the thinking of things is, when we can never rightly know them. (ED.)

existed, save as the expression of the vital and unquestioned faith of a people. Such was Catholicism in the middle ages ; for which, when the world wearied of it, and cast it off, in its new-found wisdom, no substitute could be found, save a theology which proclaimed every man his own teacher and his own priest, with an inalienable right to believe the wrong.* The instinct of human nature, from the beginning of the world, has been to embody in visible forms the objects of its worship ; doubtless bearing within it the inevitable tendency to materialism. The sacramental system met this double requirement of the human soul, in its inseparable union of the outward sign with the invisible Presence. It taught once for all, that union of soul with matter, which was the primary work of the Incarnation, and which for ever purified and hallowed the use of outward symbols ; and the fact that later ages, led by a degenerate priesthood, corrupted that system into a material worship, is no valid argument against it. The chosen resting-place of the sacred Presence among the Israelites, was between the wings of the golden images made by Divine command, when the people had but just left the idolatrous land of Egypt, themselves

* Down to this line, this page is unquestionably and entirely true. I do not answer for the rest of the clause—but do not dispute it. (ED.)

deeply tainted with its tendencies. The same generation in England which rejected the external means of devotion that had been sanctified by the use of centuries, put also the sacramental system out of the popular religion, and practically announced that it would get the grace of God, how and when it chose. We know what the consequences have been to the Christian faith ; we in part know, and have yet somewhat more to realise, of its results in art.

Whatever may have been the real causes of this reaction against images in the East, it resulted in the total destruction of the works of art throughout the Byzantine Empire. Mosaics were picked out, paintings destroyed, libraries burned, and images entirely swept away. The extinction of the arts in the Eastern provinces led to the emigration of numbers of artists to Italy, and so gave the death-blow to the Byzantine school ; and when the storm was past, and the Second Council of Nicæa secured once more to art its legitimate place in the Eastern Church, it laid the foundation, by its arbitrary rules, for that conventional mode of representation which has degraded Byzantine art into a species of sign-painting. On the accession of the Empress Theodora,* the worn-out

* The second Empress Theodora, wife of the Emperor Theophilus ; who governed the empire during the infancy of her son Michael III., and finally crushed out Iconoclasm.

fanaticism of Iconoclasm ended, having lasted more than a century. A solemn festival was held at S. Sophia, on February 19, 842, and, with a triumphant procession of the clergy of Constantinople, preceded by crosses, torches, and incense, religious art was finally restored to its place of honour.

Undisturbed, meanwhile, by the murmur of the terrible strife going on in unhappy Constantinople, the foundations of Italian art are being surely laid, in the valleys of Lombardy and Tuscany. Glance on a few centuries, and we shall see, in the lovely sculpture of Lucca and Verona, how their first rough work has ended. S. Zenone at Verona—where stand the griffin guardians described above—was built in the twelfth century, over a church said to have been founded by Pepin. Here is perhaps the earliest of those wheel-windows which developed into one of the most graceful characteristics of Gothic architecture. The original idea was that of a wheel of fortune, and each radius in this window is formed by a figure, representing altogether the different ranks with which fortune deals, the king being of course at the top. Eight native sculptors executed this, the font, and the interesting bronze doors, which are the oldest specimen of Italian metalwork. The porch, always the most elaborate part of a Lombard church, and sometimes the only ornamented part

of the whole building, is filled with spirited bas-reliefs ; history, tradition, and symbolism, all combined in its small space. Conspicuous on the front of the gable, is the hand of God in blessing ; below, over the door, is a sculpture of the deputation sent to S. Zeno by the Emperor Gallienus. On the side walls, are two series of sculptures in small compartments, one representing the history of Adam and Eve, the other of our Lord. In a lower range of sculpture, the Lombard passion of hunting, jousting, and fighting, gleams out still unsubdued ; on one side being the famous ‘chase of Theodoric ;’ dogs, horses, and men, all in life-like speed ; but—for the Lombards are Catholics now—with a devil at the end, waiting for the great Arian king. The small pictures of the doors, forty-eight in number, seem at first glance to be so many indistinguishable round bosses, but, quaint and rude as they are, are full of life and thought. The pillars of the porch, surmounted by delicate classic capitals, rest on the backs of the griffins, and the signs of the zodiac are sculptured round the arch. Of nearly the same date is the Duomo, which has a similarly beautiful porch, supported on lions, and also a finely sculptured façade. Most of all, perhaps, the Lombard spirit rests on the churches of Lucca. The grand old church of S. Michele, founded by Teutprandus in 764, was

rebuilt by the Benedictines in the twelfth century, when the façade was executed, which is the noblest monument existing of Lombard art, refined by Christianity, and softened under the sunny skies of Italy. Four tiers of white marble arcades rise to the gable, of exquisitely carved columns, the spaces covered with mystical sculpture; an immense figure of S. Michael with bronze wings, surmounting all. Delicate inlaid ornaments of white marble on green serpentine, ornament the walls, and the exquisite finish of the work, from gable to portal, is wonderful.* There is no rough sculpture now, with dark fitful shadows, no devils, or monsters, or wild beasts, no fierce or cruel men. The quiet influences of the Southern land have done their work. The demons of lawless war and cruel chase have been transformed into the Archangel of Christian chivalry;† the wild Norse tribes have trimmed the vines, and sown and reaped the corn, which they found in the deserted plains of Lombardy, and learned in truth the Christian faith, and with it the Christian life.

* A plate in the appendix to vol. i. of 'The Stones of Venice' may give some idea of the beauty of the workmanship.

The church is now only a modern architect's copy. (ED.)

† S. Michael was the favourite dedication of the later Lombards.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PISAN SCULPTORS.

			Born.		Died.
Niccola Pisano	..	..	1205-7	..	1278
Arnolfo del Cambio	..	..	1232	..	1300
Giovanni Pisano	..	..	1240	..	1321

WE have reached a new era in the history of art. The Lombard sculptors have done their work, and left a great inheritance to the land they have won. The undying art-genius of the Etruscan race has flashed into life once more, kindled by the Northern fire; the spiritual inspiration only was wanting, which came with the dawn of a great age in the history of Christendom—the thirteenth century.

The latter half of the twelfth century was marked by the strife between Frederick Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III., which agitated Italy for so long, checking the progress of art and letters by the ruin and devastation it carried into Italy. The war between the spiritual and temporal powers of Europe,

which waged so fiercely till the destruction of the prestige of the Papal supremacy in the next century, was beginning in all its fury. In England indeed, that strife, represented by the contest between Henry II. and Thomas à Becket, had ended in the triumph of law ; and Philip le Bel of France dared to say that he would disinherit his own children "if they recognised any other power than that of God in temporal matters." But in Italy the strife was fiercer, and more disastrous to the interests of religion and civilisation ; for it was a life-struggle between the representative of the ancient empire of the Cæsars on the one side, and the spiritual potentate on the other, whose power had been growing, ever since the fall of Rome, into gigantic proportions, and who now claimed to rule the world. The Papal dominion reached its culminating point during the first sixteen years of the thirteenth century, in the court of Innocent III. The extraordinary claims which Gregory VII. had put forth a century since, had now become an article of faith ; and the right of the Pope to decide the fate of the empire, to grant kingdoms, or to absolve subjects from their allegiance, was only to be questioned at the risk of excommunication and interdict. So strong is the fascination which, in all ages of the Church, has attached to

the idea of a universal Christian commonwealth! Too late to save their kingdoms from strife and misery, the crowned heads of Europe awoke to their danger. The assertion of their rights was followed by interdict and excommunication, and whole nations were deprived of the privileges of Christianity. But the hour of triumph was the signal for the beginning of the retribution which, slowly but surely, was ordained to overtake the Roman Church. Suddenly the reactionary movement spread all over Christendom, threatening to overwhelm Catholic doctrine with Papal supremacy. Heresies spread through Europe, which the Church vainly endeavoured to stamp out by fire and sword. In Italy, France, Belgium, and England, the opposing movement gathered. The story of persecution is best known, in the sad history of the sufferings of the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont. "Never, in the history of man," says Dr. Milman,* "were the great eternal principles of justice and common humanities so trodden under foot as in the Albigensian war."

In this critical period, the middle classes, which were yearly growing in wealth and importance, com-

* 'Latin Christianity,' vol. v. book ix. chap. viii. p. 426.

bined to protect themselves against the tyranny of the Pope, and the oppression of the aristocracy. Brotherhoods, religious and secular, formed themselves all over Europe ; in the cities, the burghers established municipalities, and the artisans guilds, which became the strongholds of art and commerce throughout the middle ages. In Italy, the free cities were levelling the towers of the nobles and asserting their liberties ; Florence, Pisa, Genoa, were planting the germs of their great commonwealths. Before the beginning of the century, Venice had become the great commercial city of the world, in consequence of her Eastern navigation, and was fast rising in wealth and power ; she had taken possession of Constantinople, which, within the next few years, she made a centre for free commerce, and had set an example of independence, which other Italian states were not slow to follow.

Tokens of the dawn of independent thought were not wanting in this crisis. The scholars and descendants of Abelard, the great philosopher of the twelfth century, were stirring new life into the universities of Europe ; France, Spain, and Germany were sharing in the revival. Languages began to form themselves out of the Teutonic dialects of Europe, and Latin was becoming the language of the Church only. In

England, the Anglo-Saxon and Norman tongues were forming the noble English of Wycliffe and Chaucer ; in Italy, a new poetry, inspired by the utterances of S. Francis, was heralding the renaissance of the arts.

The scholastic philosophy, which had been in process of development throughout the preceding century, reached its zenith in the latter half of the twelfth century ; and henceforth the two great orders became the embodiments of the two great schools of theology which ruled the middle ages. S. Thomas Aquinas, the Dominican, the champion of intellect and understanding as the first principles of religion, headed the one ; Duns Scotus, the Franciscan, led the other, proclaiming the will as the most important principle. It has been said that "to give thought an object beyond itself, to show that spiritual power is mightier than all material power,"* was the inspiration of the thirteenth century. Of this inspiration, S. Francis and S. Dominic were the embodiment ; this it was which made the foundation of these orders the great fact of the century ; and for this reason, if for no other, they are entitled to the everlasting remembrance of

* Maurice's 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy,' Mediæval, chap. v. p. 167.

mankind. The Pope dreamed that a palm-tree shot up between his feet to the very heavens, becoming suddenly a refuge from the storm and heat, a shadow in the weary land; he summoned S. Francis to his presence, approved his rules, and recognised his order. Innocent III. did wisely to patronise the new brotherhood, for it was ere long to wield an overwhelming moral power in Christendom. The prophecy of S. Francis should soon be fulfilled as, rising from his long prayer, while the morning dawned over the hills of Rivo Torto, he gathered his little band around him, and, drawing the sign of the cross on the sand, arranged them at the four points, and sent them forth to be the reformers of Christendom, even as another band had gone forth a thousand years before; like them to grow into a mighty army of saints and martyrs. "I see a great multitude coming," he said; "the roads are crowded with men in eager haste. The French are coming, the Spaniards are hastening, the English and Germans are running; I hear the tread of the multitude. Be patient in tribulation, fervent in prayer, fearless in labour."

Many are the names which these two great orders have contributed, to make the thirteenth century brilliant in the annals of literature: S. Thomas Aquinas, the 'Angelic Doctor'; S. Bonaventura,

the 'Seraphic Doctor'; Duns Scotus, the 'Subtle Doctor'; S. Benedict, Albertus Magnus, Bacon, are some of them. S. Bonaventura, the quiet preacher of the Christian life, whose sweet and gentle character shone through all his teaching, did good service to art. He wrote a treatise on the 'Reduction of Arts under Theology,' taking for his text, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights." In it he taught, for the first time, how "the illumination of mechanical arts is a way to the illumination of sacred Scripture; and there is nothing in them which does not predict and foreshadow the true wisdom." "It is manifest also," concludes the great Franciscan doctor, "how large is the path of light, and how in everything which is felt, or which is known, God Himself is latent. And this is the fruit of all science, that, in all, faith should be built up, God should be honoured, manners should be softened and harmonised, and those consolations should be imbibed which come from the union of the Bridegroom with the Bride." These were memorable words, and likely to leave their stamp on the age in which they were written.

If there is one practical feature more than another which characterises the Franciscan revival, it is that of love. Love to every creature of God's making, "the

least with the greatest because God made them ;” love to bird and beast, flower and tree, typified in the sweet legends which have gathered like a halo around the memory of the great saint of the people ; love and reverence above all, to every human soul bought by the blood of Christ. Little enough of such practical religion—of a theology which had time to trouble itself with the happiness or misery of mankind—had been seen in Italy for many a day. The Vicar of Christ on earth had other things to think of. Innocent III., in the dizzy heights of his power—the loftiest ever reached by a Roman Pontiff—was straining every nerve to maintain the prestige of the Roman supremacy, over the crowned heads of Europe. He had to assert his rights over the refractory kingdom of England somewhat loudly, before he could obtain even the reluctant concessions which were soon nullified by the barons of England, in Magna Charta. Then he had to take up the challenge of brave Raymond of Toulouse, who refused to extirpate with fire, sword, and torture, the simple mountaineers of his Piedmont state. The Crusaders were singing their disgraced ‘Te Deum’ in the desecrated cathedral of Constantinople, and Innocent had to ‘suppress’ the Greek Church, and send a usurper to sit on the ‘glorious throne of the Oriental Patriarch.’ And,

theology needing some fresh articles of faith, it was necessary that the Pope should preside over a council to provide for the new definition of Transubstantiation,* as well as for the increased power of the priesthood.

So it was that, when S. Francis appeared, preaching his doctrines of peace on earth to God-fearing men, all Italy listened, and followed the apostle of the new Gospel; and his words and deeds rang through the hearts of men, and woke up as by a trumpet note the slumbering life of Christianity. Practical, vital art followed close on a revival of practical Christian teaching in life; and a Renaissance dawned, more worthy of the name than that other change, two hundred years later, which was rather a passing from life to death, than, as this one, of new birth out of sleep. And the Tuscan schools arose to demonstrate, once for all, the sacredness of that outward and visible world which we call Nature, and to assert the high nobility of redeemed humanity.

“On that side,” writes Dante in his description of Assisi, “where the mountain slopes most gently, a sun was born to the world; . . . therefore let him who would speak rightly of this place, call it not

* Made at the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215.

Assisi, but Oriente." * On a rugged spur of the Apennines, Assisi stands out in its solitary grandeur, swept by the Tiber at its olive-clothed base ; its stern head towering up, bare and bleak, into the sunlight which seems to deepen the solemn purple shadows, beyond the fitful lights which it throws. Fit place for the birthplace and the grave of the great ascetic. The vast convent walls still stand under the shadow of the dark rocks, the towers and buildings of the ancient town nestling around its shelter ; and neither human hands, nor the passing of time have had power to work much change over the scenes hallowed by the memory of the great saint. Here, two years after the death of S. Francis (1226), was begun that church which occupies so important a place in the history of Italian art. There being no architect of much ability at that time in Italy, Elias, the superior of the order, secured the services of a German, named Jacopo Tedesco, who was in the employ of Frederick II. ; and thus was the Northern style grafted on to Italian architecture. There are two distinct churches in this remarkable building, one over the other ; the grave of S. Francis being cut lower still, in the rocky foundations. The lower

* 'Paradiso,' canto xi. 49.

church is in fact a crypt, dimly lighted, save for the three large pointed windows of the apse; the deep blue of the low groined roof throwing an additional shade over its gloom.* Enormous piers support the weight of the stone roof, and partly also that of the upper church. This is a Latin cross without aisles, and has beautiful mullioned pillars, light trefoiled arcades, and all the other characteristics of that Northern Gothic which was then approaching its highest perfection, and the sight of which must have flashed like an inspiration on the Italian genius. Around this sanctuary, hallowed by the tomb of the man who had rekindled the spiritual life of Christendom, a new school of art gathered. S. Francesco became not only a magnificent monument, but a centre of the life which S. Francis had breathed into Italy; gathering alike worshippers to the sacred grave, and artists to immortalise the life of the great teacher of practical Christianity. On the walls of this Church† is written the history of Italian painting.

* There is a fine tomb in this crypt, that of Hecuba, queen of Cyprus, who died here on a visit to S. Francis' shrine in 1240. It is thought to have been executed by a scholar of Niccola Pisano.

† Mr. Hemans remarks, that, among the few good things done by the Commission for the Suppression of the Convents in Italy, has been the removal of the tinsel and tawdriness with which the paintings had been spoiled and concealed. S. Francesco is a notable instance of this. 'Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art,' vol. ii. chap. v. p. 317.

Here are the rude outlines of early unknown painters ; here Giunta da Pisa * painted in the transepts ; and, after an interval of fifteen years, during which time, none had been deemed worthy to continue the work, here the young Cimabue was summoned by his patrons, the Franciscans. Here also Giotto painted—the pupil by the side of the master—sparing, it is said, to efface Cimabue's work, for love of him, and in memory of all he had taught him on the walls of this sacred monument of Italian art ; and around this church gathered Giotto's pupils, each desiring to leave his mark on the walls where the founders of Italian painting had inaugurated their work.

First to lead the Renaissance was Niccola, the Pisan sculptor. He was the son of one Pietro di Apulia, perhaps himself a sculptor,† and was born just at the dawn of the thirteenth century (1205 or 1207). In the Campo Santo still stand the Greek sarcophagi which were the spoils of the Pisan arms, among them, as Vasari tells us, “one most fair, on which was sculptured the hunting of Meleager,” which was the chosen model of the young sculptor, and the influence

* One of the earliest of the Italian painters whose name has come down to us as celebrated in his time. He painted in S. Francesco about 1252.

† Hemans' 'Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy,' vol. i. chap. x. p. 558, note 1.

of which may be traced in the famous pulpit which was the work of later years. Pisa was then the centre of Eastern traffic for all Europe, and, both in her wars with the Saracens and her constant intercourse with the East, had collected a vast quantity of Eastern spoils; and some of her sculptured treasures were, perhaps, remains of the 'golden age' of Augustus, when, as mentioned by Strabo, Pisa was famed for her carving.* However they may have become possessed of them, these sarcophagi were much valued by the Pisans, and were honoured by being made the receptacles for the illustrious Pisan dead. They stood in the cathedral until the completion of the Campo Santo (1293), when they were removed and placed, as we now see them, along its cloister.

This then was the school of the young Niccola, and among these sculptures of the ancient world, he caught the inspirations which made him the founder of Gothic sculpture. Good use Niccola must have made of his time too, for while he was yet but a boy of fifteen, Frederick II.—whose influence and patronage combined with other circumstances, to assist the revival of art and letters in that age—passed through Pisa on his way to his coronation at Rome,

* Perkins' 'Tuscan Sculptors,' vol. i. p. 4, note i.

and made him his architect. So he began his life early, wandering about among the great cities of Italy, studying all their finest churches, seizing and adapting every fresh element of thought which came in his way, and working all materials into noble designs, by the power of his own genius. Careful, laborious, and profoundly thoughtful, he was one of those men marked out alike by nature and circumstance to leave their impress on their age, and his influence over Italian art can hardly be overrated.

In 1231, the Paduans, having heard of the fame of the young Niccola, sent for him that they might entrust him with the building of the new and splendid church, which they wished to dedicate to their patron saint, S. Anthony. It was a truly remarkable building which he raised, and it bears singular marks of his wanderings in Italy, and of the use which he had early learned to make of all the ideas which Northern, Southern, and Eastern art had, one by one, supplied him with. Probably he had been to Venice and seen the glory of Byzantine architecture there; he surely must have been to Assisi, to see the wonderful new church which was then the admiration of Italy; for the Gothic element which he worked into his Paduan church, could hardly have been learned elsewhere. Very Byzantine-looking, too, is S. Anthony's, with its

clustered domes and pinnacles, like a dim reflection of S. Mark's ; and altogether it is one of the noblest, as well as the most remarkable churches of Italy, in this transition period.

The earliest remaining piece of sculpture by Niccola Pisano, done in 1233, still fills a lunette over the north doors of Lucca Cathedral, representing the Deposition from the Cross, and carved with a passion of feeling, and power of composition, hitherto unknown in sculpture.

He was in Florence in 1248—the memorable year when the citizens drove out the Guelphs, threw down the towers of the aristocracy, and many palaces. It is said, let us hope maliciously, that the Florentines wanted to pull down the Baptistery, the favourite place of worship of the Guelphs, in their fury against the exiled faction. At any rate they were determined to pull down the tower of the Death-watch, hard by it, and Niccola was employed to do the work, and by a feat of engineering then unknown, he accomplished it so that it fell across the piazza, without injuring the adjacent buildings. “And his method,” says Vasari admiringly, “was held so ingenious and so useful for such affairs that it has since passed into a custom.”

During the next ten years, Niccola continued in various places his work of renovating Italian archi-

ture; and it is curious that, known as his name is almost exclusively as a sculptor, the first half of his life was devoted almost entirely to architecture. He was the first of the great Tuscans who, uniting an equal knowledge of architecture, engineering, and sculpture, made the buildings of Italy what they were in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

It is said that Niccola intended the beautiful pulpit* of the Pisa Baptistery (1260), which made his name famous as a sculptor, to be his memorial in his native city. The form of it—a hexagon supported on many columns—was altogether new in Italy, where pulpits had hitherto been shaped like a sarcophagus, and raised on four pillars. It rests on nine columns of granite, jasper, and marble, which stand alternately on lions and on simple basements. But the symbolic creatures of the Veronese churches have sprung into life at last, and the grim, steadfast guardian of the Lombards, is transformed into a lion whose watchful care is centred in her cub. Two desks for the reading of the Epistle and Gospel are supported, the former by an eagle, the latter

* There is a good model of this pulpit in the Kensington Museum, through which we may learn much of the rise of Gothic sculpture.

You cannot do anything of the kind. Pisan sculpture can only be studied in the original marble: half its virtue is in the chiselling. (ED.)

by a simple column.* The five sides of the pulpit, divided by triple columns, are filled with bas-reliefs on alabaster and Parian marble, the subjects being the Birth of Christ, Adoration of the Magi, Circumcision, Crucifixion, and Last Judgment; and it is noticeable, as showing Niccola's study of classic models, even in his maturer years, that several of the figures were imitated from Greek models,† as that of the blessed Virgin in the Adoration, which is copied from the Phædra of the Countess Beatrice's tomb in the Campo Santo. Between the columns, under the round arches which spring from the basement pillars, are trefoiled arches, such as had never been seen in Tuscany before; and it is these arches which have made the pulpit of Pisa Baptistery famous to all time as the beginning of an era in art; for from that day forth, Gothic architecture reigned in Italy.‡ “Moved by the fame of this great work,” says Vasari, the Sienese requested Niccola to carve a similar pulpit for their own cathedral, which was then

* It should be remembered that these splendid pulpits of the middle ages were not merely for preaching, but that they were used, like the ambons of the early Church, for reading the Epistle and Gospel from; an act which was always performed, with great ritualistic observance, from some place of honour.

† ‘*Tuscan Sculptors*,’ vol. i. chap. i. p. 17.

‡ See ‘*Val d’Arno*,’ by Professor Ruskin, lect. i.

approaching completion. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the little state had become so wealthy, that they were able to build a new cathedral, which was finished, with the exception of the dome and the façade, by 1236. In 1245 Niccolo was commissioned to design the façade, which was afterwards superseded by another; so that he must have been well known in Siena before he went there to design the pulpit (1266). The contract for this work is still extant, and is noteworthy as showing the manner in which the artists of that age were paid. Niccola pledged himself to furnish eleven columns and capitals of white marble, and sixteen small ones, within one year; to accept no other commission, and to reside at Siena till the completion of the work; Arnolfo, Lapo, and Giovanni his son, assisting him. For this he was to have eight solidos (about twelve Tuscan pauls) a day, with board and lodging, and exemption from the service of the republic.* Such were the terms for which the highest art which the age could produce, was executed, and for which the most renowned sculptor of that century contentedly did his immortal work. There is no demand of a fabulous sum of

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle's 'History of Painting in Italy,' vol. i. chap. iv. p. 132.

money on the part of the man for whose work all Italy was contending, nor any attempt on the part of the citizens to bargain about the price they must pay, for their free gift to the house of their God.

Before and after his work at Siena, Niccola was engaged at Bologna, in making the shrine of S. Dominic (died 1221), that famous work which continued to increase in size and magnificence till the close of Italian art ; the last great addition to which was the kneeling angel of Michael Angelo. Niccola's share in the work consisted in designing the sculptures of the sarcophagus, with stories from the life of S. Dominic ; the only ones by his own hand being,—

1. S. Dominic raising a young nobleman to life ;
2. His vision of SS. Peter and Paul, who give him a staff and a book ;
3. S. Dominic showing the book to the monks ;
4. Angels bringing miraculous bread into the refectory when the monks had no food ;
5. S. Dominic submitting his books to the trial by fire, with those of the heretics.

Niccola's pupil, Fra Guglielmo Agnelli, sculptured the rest, together with the statuettes at the corners. This monk made himself somewhat famous by his curious theft of a bone of S. Dominic, while sculpturing the sarcophagus. He managed to conceal the robbery all his life, and only confessed it when on his deathbed.

"If," is the quaint comment of the chronicler, "piety can absolve from theft, Fra Guglielmo is to be praised, though never to be imitated."

In 1274, when close upon seventy, Niccola went his last journey, to design a fountain for the Perugians, which having done, he placed the superintendence of it in the hands of Giovanni, his son, who had already been engaged to make the tomb of Pope Urban IV. in that city.* Twenty-four of the statuettes are said to be by Niccola, who sent them from Pisa; the rest, with its two stories of marble, and one of bronze, on "twelve degrees of twelve-faced steps," and its fifty bas-reliefs of mythical and Scripture subjects, is Giovanni's work.† Beautiful even in grey decay, we can yet scarcely picture the loveliness of this first Gothic fountain of Italy, as its wrought marble and bronze glanced and flashed in the sun. Yet the modern Perugians have cared little to preserve the noble remains of a work which their ancestors, in their pride and joy at its possession, made laws to protect, and deemed one of the glories of Italy.

While this work was doing, Giovanni received news of his father's illness, and, though starting at once to

* See 'Val d'Arno,' lect. ii., in which also is a plate of the fountain.

† Its summit was finished by an artist named Rosso, in 1277, who did the griffins, lions, and nymphs of the upper basin.

see him, was too late. Honoured and beloved by all, his noble, useful life passed away quietly and peacefully (1278), and the mantle of his fame fell on Giovanni, and Arnolfo del Cambio.

When the Pisans had lost Niccola, they received Giovanni with double welcome, so that he stayed among them, and built the beautiful Campo Santo cloister, which they had long contemplated. In 1188, a fleet's burden of earth had been brought from Mount Calvary, by Archbishop Lanfranchi, that the burial-ground of the city might be formed of the sacred earth; and it was laid out of the traditional size and proportions of Noah's ark, in mystic allusion to the gathering in by the Church of Christ, of those who, having passed the waves of this troublesome world, had reached safely the Land of everlasting rest. So, to surround this ground, was built (1278) the world-famed cloister, which gave so meet a name, thenceforth, to the burial-grounds of Italy. Its long line skirts the road, fixing the eye beyond the white marble Duomo, beyond Baptistery and Campanile, forming a back-ground to all. Inside, a broad, flat-roofed aisle, lighted by Gothic windows, through the four open doorways of which, we may see the resting-place of the dead, with its cypresses and flowers. A 'Holy Field' indeed; a place where few could walk unmoved;

where the dust of many generations of Christian dead mingles with the earth "from the Land made holy by one Tomb;" the voices of the preachers who have long since gone to their own last account, speaking clear and true from the mouldering walls. The sea-winds have blown on it for five hundred years and more, and crept within its arches, and dimmed its coloured walls; but it still remains the loveliest cloister among all the fair buildings of Italy. An unknown artist painted the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension there. Then came Andrea Orcagna, with his Triumph of Death and Last Judgment; then legends of the saints by Spinello of Arezzo; then the history of Job, long ascribed to Giotto, but now believed to be by Francesco da Volterra (1370-1372), and, lastly, a gigantic picture, occupying almost the whole line of the north wall, by Fra Angelico's favourite pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli (1469-1485).

This work done (1286), Giovanni went to Siena to rebuild the façade of the Duomo, which remains to this day, though with the addition of statues by another artist, and the marble facing which was added fifty years later. The works of that Cathedral, one of the most precious monuments of the middle ages, extended from the beginning of the thirteenth, in a continuous line, to the end of the fourteenth century,

and all the genius of Siena worked there in successive generations. It seems that Giovanni had learned to love the quiet Tuscan city, and its beautiful Cathedral, during his three years' sojourn; for he prepared his last resting-place there, and the slab under which he wished to lie, may still be seen, with his name engraven on it. They made him a free citizen, exempt from taxes and service, for his good work done among them, and perhaps thought to induce him to spend his life among them. But sculptors and architects were too much needed in Italy, and he passed on from city to city, welcomed everywhere, and leaving beautiful memorials behind him. His most celebrated work, the shrine of S. Donato, in Arezzo Cathedral (1298), is one of the finest monuments of the Pisan school,* and shows what it had wrought for Gothic architecture, since the day when Niccola drew those rude cusped arches on the Baptistery pulpit. Numbers of saints and martyrs stand around the sculptured sarcophagus, each under a Gothic canopy, and the true spirit of Gothic art bursts forth in its changeful outline of delicate carving. In 1300 Giovanni went to Pistoja to design the pulpit

* No. He tried to be too fine, and overdid it. The work is merely accumulated commonplace. (ED.)

for the little church of S. Andrea, in which he followed the design of the Pisan pulpit in its chief characteristics. A holy water stoup in S. Giovanni is his work also, and he did some bas-reliefs in the Baptistery, and other now forgotten works of restoration. Giovanni's next journey was to Florence, to see his old friend and fellow-pupil Arnolfo, then in the height of his renown, having won the gratitude of the Florentine people for the churches and palaces he had built them, and gained, as Giovanni at Siena, the honour of citizenship in the place of his adoption. A great group met that year in Florence. There was Cimabue, then nearing the close of his long life ; Arnolfo, in the midst of his crowning work of S. Maria del Fiore ; Giotto, then perhaps painting the Bargello chapel, after having won his fame in Rome :—four men great among the great of Italy. Florence needed all her money just then for the cathedral and campanile, which were “to exceed whatever in that kind had been achieved of old,” and the only work which Giovanni did there was a Madonna over a side door of the Duomo.

In 1305 he was commissioned to make the monument of Benedict XI. at Perugia, who died, it was said, by poison, a victim to the sins of his predecessors in the Papal chair. One of the first of those

canopied monuments with effigy lying beneath, which were so numerous in the succeeding century, it is also one of the most beautiful. It is one of the earliest instances of that Pisan custom of carving curtains round tombs, which afterwards became so vulgarised. But it was, in its first freshness, "an error," as Professor Ruskin says, "so full of feeling as to be sometimes all but redeemed, and altogether forgiven." Laid high on the marble tomb, the figure rests in perfect repose, not of death, nor of sleep, but of that ideal union of both, which marks the best period of monumental sculpture, under a Gothic canopy supported by beautiful twisted and inlaid columns; and the angels are drawing back the curtains, to see if their charge sleeps well. It was meet that it should fall to the hand of the great Pisan sculptor, to carve reverently the quiet features of the good Niccolo Boccasini. Called, like another king long ago, from keeping his father's flock, to rule the Church of God, he had won his way by the holiness of his life, from a simple Dominican monk to be general of his order, whence he was chosen to the Papal chair. He was taken quickly from the evil to come, dying within the year of his election.

Giovanni returned to Pisa to die, as his father had done before him. Like him, he passed in a good old age to his rest, and by his side was laid to sleep

under the shadow of his early work, in the quiet Campo Santo.

Arnolfo del Cambio completes the great trio who led the first Renaissance. Born 1232, he was eight years older than his fellow-pupil Giovanni Pisano, and was a 'magister'—in modern language, had taken his degree in art—while still working under Niccola. There are, however, no records of his being settled independently, until the year 1277, when the magistrates of Perugia wrote to ask leave of Charles of Anjou, for whom he was then working, to invite him to assist at the fountain. We do not know whether he went or not, and neither record nor tradition ascribes any of the sculpture to his name.

The two probably met, after Niccola's death, at Orvieto, in 1280, where the generally received tradition ascribes to them some of the bas-reliefs of the magnificent façade, matchless perhaps in Italian Gothic. Here also, in the Church of S. Domenico, he executed the beautiful monument of Cardinal de Braye. Two pieces only of Arnolfo's work remain in Rome. One is the lovely altar-canopy of S. Paolo-fuori-le-Mura, almost the only relic of that glorious basilica, which was saved from the fire of 1823.* It

* It is generally received as Arnolfo's work, although he was not in Rome the year it was made (1285). But he might, of course, have made it at Florence.

is a lovely work of early Italian Gothic, rich with sculpture and mosaic, supported on porphyry columns. Arnolfo's other work in Rome is the tomb of Boniface VIII., who, after the downfall of his grandeur and his power, came back to Rome to die a broken-hearted man, and was buried in the crypt of S. Peter's Basilica. Few perhaps of the hurrying passers-by in those dim vaults, stay to muse by that unpretending monument, on the strange vicissitudes of a restless prelate's life, who once shook Europe with his demonstrations, and now lies, almost forgotten, under Arnolfo's quiet effigy.

It was this great architect who first brought Gothic art into his adopted city, Florence ; together, Giovanni of Pisa and Arnolfo, carried it through the length and breadth of Italy. Niccola laid the foundations of it, and Giovanni lent strong hands to raise the work ; but Arnolfo del Cambio was the first master of Gothic architecture, and all art history points to his greatness.

The central date of this Gothic revival in 1300—a memorable central date in European history from several points of view—but a date to be for ever remembered in art-history, as the birth-time of the most glorious art the world has ever seen. It is significant of the share which the Franciscan order

had in this movement, that Arnolfo's first great commission in Florence, was to build their church of Santa Croce. Not many, perhaps, of the visitors to that church, stay longer in its dim light, than to look round the monumental slabs which bear the names of great Florentine dead ; yet the solemn grand old pile was the first Gothic building of Florence. In 1294 the stone was laid "in the presence of many bishops, prelates, canons, and monks ; the podestà, the captain-general, the priors, and all the good people of Florence, both men and women, with great rejoicing and solemnity." So was the reign of Gothic art inaugurated by the citizens of Florence, with Arnolfo for architect, and the order of S. Francis for patron. Four years afterwards, on one of the festivals of the Virgin, another procession wound through the streets of Florence, to lay the stone of a new Cathedral (1298). A still more joyful festival was this one, for there was not a man in all that multitude, who had not contributed his share to the work, which was to be the monument of Florentine greatness. The citizens had taxed themselves two soldi a head, besides levying a fine on all exported merchandise ; the guild of the wool merchants undertaking the management of the funds, to which they themselves gave largely. The Florentine records have preserved for us the

lofty words in which the princely commission was given to Arnolfo.* "Since the highest mark of prudence in a people of noble origin, is to proceed in the management of their affairs so that their wisdom may be shown in their outward acts, we order Arnolfo, *capo maestro* of our commune, to make a design for the renewing of S. Reparata,† in a style of magnificence which neither the industry nor power of man can surpass. The wisest of the city being of common counsel and consent that the republic should undertake nothing unless with the determination to carry it forth from idea to performance commensurate with the grandeur of a soul composed of the minds of the whole community, and resolved with one single aim and purpose." So the stone was laid with many rejoicings, like that of S. Croce, in the presence of the assembled citizens ; and the Cathedral of the City of the Lily, found its fit dedication under the name of S. Mary of the Flower.‡ The original design was a Latin cross, the head and transverse arms of which, Arnolfo contracted into

* 'Tuscan Sculptors,' vol. i. chap. ii. p. 54.

† This was the dedication of the old cathedral, part of which they at first intended to retain. It was not finally destroyed till 1375.

‡ The shield of the city had a lily, in allusion to the tradition that Florence was built in a field of flowers.

a kind of octagon, the better to support the dome which he intended to place on it. But he only lived to see the lower structure of the walls rise from the ground, and in 1310 he died, leaving his great work to be crowned by Brunelleschi's wonderful dome, and shadowed by Giotto's matchless bell-tower. A worthy successor to the great architect arose in Giotto, who, thirty years later, was elected *capo maestro* of the works. He carried out Arnolfo's designs, though probably enlarging considerably upon them, and also designed the fairy erection covered with sculpture and statues, the destruction of which priceless work, in the sixteenth century, is almost sufficient of itself, to cover the Renaissance age with disgrace. Such was the wonderful science of its building that it is said they could hardly break it up, for it seemed "like one piece of marble."* What a testimony to the care and precision of the great artist! Arnolfo's stone-work was no whit inferior, however; and Professor Ruskin said on his return from his last visit to Florence, that not a stone has stirred these five hundred years, though the mouldering goes on year by year—"a thing to be remembered with eternal reverence."

* 'Tuscan Sculptors,' vol. i. chap. ii. p. 56. Columns which only bore 48 lbs. were strong enough, it was said, for 165 lbs.

Of the other works which Arnolfo left in Florence, the chief were—the incrustation of the Baptistery with marble, the enlarging of the city walls, and the building of the Palazzo Vecchio and that of the Podestà ; the former so defaced by Vasari afterwards that he boasted that Arnolfo would not know his own work. He also built a ‘Loggia,’ or open corn market, so that the citizens might assemble there in bad weather. It was erected on the site of an old Lombard church dedicated to S. Michael, and became, as we shall see hereafter, again a celebrated church, under the name of Or S. Michele.*

An inscription on the wall of the cathedral, is the only memorial of the grave of the great Arnolfo. Lesser men may cumber up the grand old aisles of S. Croce, and the monuments of the Renaissance disfigure them ; but Arnolfo lies unforgotten in his quiet grave, needing no memorial. All Florence is his monument.

* The derivation of ‘Or’ is supposed to be from ‘orto,’ a garden. See ‘Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art,’ chap. x. p. 550.

CHAPTER V.

THE TUSCAN SCHOOLS OF PAINTING.

SIENA.				FLORENCE.			
		Born.	Died.			Born.	Died.
Ugolino		1260	1339	Gaddo Gaddi ..		1239	1312
Duccio		1282	1339	Cimabue		1240	1302
Simone Memmi		1285	1344	Giotto		1276	1336
Pietro Lorenzetti		1317	1355	Taddeo Gaddi..	1300	{ Circ ^a 1360	
Giacomo della Quercia .. }	1371	1438					

THE first dawn of the age of Italian painting rose at Siena, and a school of artists flourished there in the thirteenth century, whose works were famed far and wide in Italy; gaining the palm over the productions of Florence in all competitions, and furnishing the altars of the Florentine churches with unrivalled Madonnas. This early school has now passed into obscurity, and the very names of its founders are forgotten, save by students of art. Among the various causes which have led to this—and that not the least—is that Vasari, in the exclusiveness of his national

bigotry, omitted all mention of the Sienese school in his 'Lives of the Italian Painters;' with the exception of a brief notice of Duccio, who was thought by the first historian of Italian art, Ghiberti, to be even superior to his great countryman, Cimabue. Other reasons may be found in the political history of the city of Siena, which, rising to a high degree of wealth and power among Italian states in the thirteenth century, gradually declined before the close of that century, distracted by internal revolutions, and had lost its place and prestige, before the science of history was sufficiently advanced to immortalise its ancient glory. Yet the Cathedral of Siena is one of the greatest memorials that ever fallen city left, to remind a forgetful world of her fame, and on its grand old walls is written the history of the nation. It was begun in 1229,* and the works extended through more than a century, amidst many troubles and vicissitudes, till about 1350 the lack of artists and the immense costs obliged the citizens to curtail the designs. Yet, till the end of the fourteenth century, works of decoration were carried on, among which were some beautiful painted windows, and the cele-

* The cathedral existed at that time, but in 1229 the work of restoration was begun, and the building altogether enlarged.

brated intarsio pavement, long ascribed to Duccio, but in reality done about 1370, thirty years after Duccio's death. In the lovely façade, the crowning glory of the building, the work (in part) of Giovanni Pisano, there stand among the company of the saints, many a Sieneſe citizen, and in the heraldic symbolism of the grotesque animals below, we may ſee the grateful remembrance of Siena, of the friendly help of neighbouring powers, now, like herſelf, but names in hiſtory.

One gifted family founded the ſchool of Siena; Guido, Mino, and their nephew Ugolino (1260–1339), of greater fame in his day than either. His work was unaniſmouſly choſen in Florence, as ſuperior to that of their own artiſts, and he painted the altar-pieces for the two great churches of Florence—S. Maria Novella and S. Croce. He alſo executed another famous picture for the Florentines; the reputation of which as miraculous, points to the honour in which Ugolino's name was held in Florence. It was a Madonna, painted on a pillar of Arnolfo's Loggia S. Michele, which was deſtroyed by fire in 1304, and a new one built by Taddeo Gaddi, the guilds of Florence decorating it with ſculpture. The honour in which this picture was held, cauſed a brotherhood to be formed under the name of S. Michele, which

became so rich, from the money poured in on the Madonna, that a church was built on the spot, and called Or S. Michele. How, or when, Ugolino's Madonna disappeared, no one knows; but the picture which now occupies its place, and round which Orcagna's sumptuous shrine was reared, is the work of a later Florentine artist.

The next great Sieneſe painter was Duccio (1282-1339), whose lovely altar-piece in Siena Cathedral—mutilated, alas! and ill-cared for, by the degenerate citizens of later ages—still remains, to show what he did for Italian art. This picture—unrivalled in its day in Italy—has been depreciated by modern critics, and the important place which it occupies as a link in the chain of art-history, forgotten or denied. The altar was detached from the wall, and therefore both sides of the panels were covered with painting; the central piece being the Madonna surrounded by saints and angels, and exquisite miniatures, representing the history of our Lord, occupying the back. In the sixteenth century the picture was moved from its place, robbed of the massive gold ornaments with which the piety of the citizens had covered it, and divided. After long neglect, the principal parts were placed over the altars of two chapels in the Cathedral, and the surrounding parts

hung on the walls of the sacristy, where they are still to be seen. When we consider the period at which this picture was painted, and the rigid types of the Byzantine figures, with their angular draperies and fixed conventional faces, which filled the churches of that age, we may sympathise with M. Kügler's enthusiasm* for a painter who so nearly "attained perfection" in the principles of religious art. His contract of 1308 still remains in the archives of Siena, in which he promises to perform the work "as the Lord shall give him cunning;" and it was finished in 1311, the simple-minded piety of the painter dedicating it to the blessed Virgin as the Patroness of Siena in these words:—

"Mater Sancta Dei, sis causa Senis requiei;
Sis Ducio vita, te quia pinxit ita."†

That this picture was hailed by the citizens of Siena as the inspiration of new thought and life into the art of their age, we may well imagine. It was a work which all had had share in, and the price—three thousand gold florins—was paid out of their united contributions to this crowning glory of their cathedral.

* 'Schools of Painting in Italy,' edited by Sir C. Eastlake, part i. book ii. p. 116.

† "Holy Mother of God, cause thou rest to Siena;
Be thou life to Duccio, because he has painted thee thus."

It was carried in procession, "on a beautiful day in June," to the Cathedral, amidst the ringing of bells and the sounding of trumpets ; the magistrates, clergy, and religious orders escorting it, followed by a multitude of citizens with their wives and families, praying as they went ; the shops were closed and alms distributed to the poor. It is difficult in this age of absorbing business, alternated with the selfish indulgence of personal taste, and desire of beauty for mere acquisition's sake, to realise a scene such as this—twice acted in that age—each time marking the joy of a people at the interpretation of the thoughts they meditated on, and the prayers they prayed, day by day. "Such an anecdote," writes Lord Lindsay, of the like carrying of Cimabue's Madonna to S. Maria del Fiore, "would be precious in the history of a people, even if it were without value in the history of art." It is indeed worth contemplating—this story of citizen-life in the middle ages—for it marks both the depth of the spiritual life of the nation, and the truth of its art perceptions ; and the double joy of the people at the new vista of thought opened out to them by their chosen interpreter of the Faith, and in the dedication of this their free gift to the house of their God, bears its lesson for all time. These merchant citizens of a bygone age gave in some true

sense their tithes to the Lord, and offered not unto Him of that which cost them nothing. In open-hearted thankfulness they gave Him of their "treasures of wisdom and beauty ; of the thought that invents, and the hand that labours ; of wealth of wood, and weight of stone ; of the strength of iron, and of the light of gold." And, all else for which they laboured and sacrificed having passed away, "of them and of their life, and their toil upon the earth, one reward, one evidence is left to us. They have taken with them to the grave their powers, their honour, and their errors ; but they have left us their Adoration."*

Other pictures Duccio did for Florence, but none remain ; and even in his own city, of the "many pictures on gold grounds" which Vasari tells us he painted "for the City of Siena," there only exist five or six, four of which are in the Académie des Beaux-Arts. Neither are any traces left, of the school founded by him, of which it was said by an old writer that "as many painters proceeded from it as the warriors who of old descended out of the Trojan horse."† There is, thus, no continuous history of the school of Siena. Simone Memmi (1285-1344) revived

* 'Seven Lamps of Architecture : ' "Lamp of Sacrifice."

† Supplement to the "Penny Cyclopædia," vol. i. p. 497.

its fame, working much at Florence, where he was held in high esteem. The beautiful Madonna of the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena, and the yet lovelier one—his central work—of the Dominican church of Orvieto, bear witness to the delicacy and grace of his work, and are yet more striking in their deep spirituality. His dear friend and almost brother, the favourite pupil of Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, painted with him in the chapter-house of S. Maria Novella, now the Spanish Chapel, the series of frescoes which still remain there.

Two brothers, of whom little is known save their names, Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti, close the barren history of Sienese painting. The latter was, it is said, a close student and profound admirer of his countryman Duccio. A large fresco in the Campo Santo at Pisa is among his few identified works.

One more artist of Siena we must mention briefly before taking leave of the school: a sculptor this time, and one whose name should be more famous than it is, Giacomo della Quercia (1371–1438). He shared the fate of many Sienese artists in those distracted years of the decline of Siena, and was exiled with his patron when first beginning his career.* In 1402 he

* In 1368 four thousand citizens were banished, among whom were many artists.

was competing for the Baptistery gate of Florence, and, though unsuccessful, his design was honourably mentioned, as next in merit to Ghiberti's and Brunelleschi's. Quercia worked at Ferrara for some time, executing a tomb, and other works, among which was a beautiful fountain in honour of the bringing of the water into the city, which, in the delight of the citizens at the event, they called the Fonte Gaja. An ancient Venus had been found near the place, and this had at first been erected as a centre piece; but it having occurred suddenly to the citizens that such a presiding genius was unlucky, they carefully buried it again, and sent for Quercia, who carved them a nobler memorial, sculptured all over with Bible stories, and presided over by their patroness, the Madonna. Quercia was sought after by many of the great Italian cities as one of the most famous sculptors of his age; but time has dealt hardly with his works, so that scarcely any fragments remain; and not many years ago, the only piece of his work left in Siena, the beautiful fountain, was pulled down, and a modern copy set up in its place. At Lucca, however, a beautiful piece of his work may still be seen, in the north transept of the cathedral—a monument to the Lady Ilaria, wife of the lord of Lucca, who died in 1405. Professor Ruskin said of this work in one of his

lectures,* that it united, in the most perfect proportion possible, the greatest energy and science of execution, with the tenderest sentiment; "supremely right" in its standard of judgment and feeling. She lies as if sleeping, yet in slumber of unearthly repose; her hands simply crossed as they fall; the delicate folds of her dress marking the still restfulness of her form; a fillet binds her hair, one lock of which has escaped and lies on the forehead. And the dog at her feet has laid his paw upon her robe as he looks up in her face. "Will she not wake?" he is thinking. The gentle-spirited artist seems to have had a weary, troublous life; worn out with over-work, pecuniary difficulties, and the incessant worry of the ungrateful Sienese, who, having recalled him to do their fountain, seemed to think that he had no right to fulfil his obligations anywhere else, and pursued him to the grave with threats and confiscations. He died in 1438, leaving a name behind him in his native city of a wise and kindly man: "*un savio e buon uomo.*" Perhaps they appreciated him more in his death than they had done in his life.

The Sienese artists became, in course of time, so influenced by and associated with those of Florence,

* No. v. of the 'Mornings in Florence'; not yet published.

as to present but few special characteristics such as we might expect in viewing their works as the productions of a separate school. The general distinction which is drawn between the schools is that the one is contemplative in character, the other dramatic; terms vague in themselves, and in their possible meaning, but still useful for the purpose of classification. The Sienese school had indeed a singular gift of idealisation and spirituality, and the tendency of their art was to explain itself by means of quiet expression, rather than by any degree of violent or dramatic action. The Florentine school, on the other hand, from the time of Cimabue, used gesture and action with increasing power of dramatic representation, and developed a tendency to realisation which made rapid strides in each succeeding generation.

The statutes of the guild of Siena, founded 1355, and all the documents relating to their art transactions, show the peculiarly serious tone of the people, and the light in which they regarded religious art. "Since by the grace of God," is the preamble of these statutes, "we are teachers to unlearned men who know not how to read, of the marvels done by the power and in the strength of holy religion; and the foundations of our faith are principally laid in the adoration and belief of one God in Trinity, and in God's infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love

and mercy ; and since no undertaking, however small, can have a beginning or an end without these three things,—that is, without the power to do, without knowledge, and without true love of the work (*con amore volere*) ; and since in God every perfection is eminently united ; now to the end that in this our calling, however unworthy it may be, we may have a good beginning and a good ending in all our works and deeds, we will earnestly ask the aid of the Divine grace, and commence by a dedication to the honour of the Name, and in the Name of the most Holy Trinity.” The rules insisted on the punctual observance of fasts and festivals, of confession and communion, and on an honest and religious life and relations of mutual goodwill and brotherhood. They forbade the painting of tavern signs, or of other vulgarisation of the art ; and in electing an architect for the cathedral, as late as 1438, the council decreed that no usurer, nor gamester, nor contractor for illicit gain, nor immoral person, should be eligible for the office. No wonder that men so imbued with the sacredness of their calling, so recognised by the people as the consecrated teachers of religion and morality, and the guardians of sacred history and tradition, should have produced such a living power as the religious art of the middle ages.

A revival of the art of mosaic in Constantinople

caused a number of Greek artists to be employed in Italy towards the middle of the thirteenth century, to teach the secrets of mosaic-work, and to decorate the Italian churches. A trio of artists led the way towards developing and improving the art in Italy: Mino of Siena, Andrea Tafi, and Gaddo Gaddi. The Florentines desiring to encrust the cupola of the octagon Baptistery, then their cathedral, with mosaics, sent Tafi to Venice to invite the help of the Greek mosaicists then employed at S. Mark's. He returned with a Greek artist, one Apollonius, who taught him the secrets of the art, himself working with the Florentines on the cupola, the mosaics of which remain to this day, an interesting memorial of the period when Florentine art first awoke to life.* And the old Etruscan baptistery, filled with the mosaics of Tafi and Gaddi, and encrusted with marbles by Arnolfo, became the centre of the new life, as its transformed structure had been the centre of a new religion,† to Florence. So it came to pass that the first influences which affected

* The colossal figure of Christ enthroned is ascribed to Tafi; the rest, comprising a whole series of pictures from the Old and New Testaments, are by different artists down to Filippo Lippi.

† The baptistery of Florence was either an old temple of Mars or rebuilt from the stones which composed it.

Florentine art were Byzantine, and that Eastern artists were working in Florence in the time of Cimabue's youth.

Cimabue, 'first of the Florentines,' was born 1240, of the noble family of the Gualtieri. Sent by his parents to the great school of Florence—S. Maria Novella—he chiefly occupied his time, says Vasari, in drawing on his books "men, horses, houses, and other various fancies;" slipping away when he could, to watch the artists painting in the Church of the Convent. At last, his parents, hoping that the early promise of genius in the child would be fulfilled, apprenticed him to the artists whose work he had wistfully haunted for so long; and from them Cimabue learnt his art, and with it the Byzantine mannerism which was so marked a characteristic of his early style, and which indeed was never effaced from it. His great inspiration all life through, was in the painting of Madonnas; and of these, among the few remaining which were painted in early life, are the Madonna of the Florence Academy,* and the Madonna of the Louvre, which was painted for the Franciscans of Pisa. In 1265, when twenty-five, he was invited by the general of the Franciscans to continue the

* No. 2, Tuscan Gallery.

paintings at Assisi, which Giunta Pisano had left some twelve years before. Here he painted the frescoes of the south transept, and a colossal Madonna, in the upper church, and perhaps also the ceiling and aisles of the lower church. The series along the walls of the nave being also of his school—perhaps his designs—Professor Ruskin spoke of them in his Oxford lectures as though he considered Cimabue's hand to have been in them.

It was after Cimabue's return from Assisi that he painted that Madonna which has made his name immortal in history. We may well fancy how many thoughts of thankfulness and joy passed through his soul, as he gave his strength to the work which was to be his offering to the spiritual home of his early life, and to the church whence his first inspirations had come, and his first efforts been blessed. It was worthy of the occasion. "From the date of this altar-piece," writes an author not given to much weakness on the subject of early religious art,* "the pre-eminence of the Florentine school begins to develop itself, . . . and it would alone suffice to explain the superiority of Cimabue over his predecessors and contemporaries. . . . Without it

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. i. chap. vi. p. 206.

the principal link of artistic history in Florence would be lost, and Giotto's greatness unexplained." In a garden outside the city was Cimabue's workshop; and there, when Charles of Anjou* came to Florence, the citizens took him, "as a mark of respect," says Vasari, that he might see the picture, the fame of which was already spreading through the city. And when it was finished, it was carried in triumphal procession, like Duccio's picture at Siena, amidst the rejoicings of the citizens, so that the quarter through which it passed was called ever after the 'Borgo Allegri.'†

So passed away for ever the unapproachable Queen Madonna, enthroned by the jealous care of Eastern theology; and the Mother-Maid, human alike in purest maidenhood and most unsullied motherhood, filled the place; teaching the simple ones of that day, in realising her true position, to love her the more because no longer a shadow between God and man;

* Brother of S. Louis.

† This story, like so many other beautiful traditions, has been denied on the ground that the quarter was called by the name before Cimabue's time. Professor Ruskin has well said that it is immaterial. Whatever might have been its name before, ever since the day when Cimabue made glad the hearts of the Florentine people by the carrying home of that Madonna, the Borgo Allegri has been linked with his name, and his only, among the fond traditions of Florence. See 'Mornings in Florence,' by Professor Ruskin: "The Golden Gate," p. 48.

interpreting to their hearts for ever the Magnificat their lips sung day by day.

Cimabue's last work was a mosaic for Pisa cathedral, which he left unfinished, dying in Florence in 1302. His portrait was painted by Simone Memmi in the chapter-house of S. Maria Novella ; and this and Ghiberti's description give us an idea of the great founder of Florentine art, as a man of "most fair presence," tall, erect, and noble-looking, of the stamp and bearing of the Florentine aristocracy in that golden age of its prime. Very noble in character, too, it is said that he was, but also very proud ; so proud, that if he discovered, or was told of a fault in his work, he would cast it aside, however costly or laborious it had been. A prince among artists, living far above the turmoil of common life, independent of its struggles ; dwelling in his own ancestral house, the beloved of the Florentine people, the pride and joy of Italy ; and passing peacefully to his honoured grave, in Arnolfo's beautiful cathedral of S. Mary of the Flower.

As the traveller ascends the hill which rises from Florence to the lowest break in the ridge of Fiesole, he passes continually beneath villa walls "bright in perfect luxury, and beside cypress hedges, enclosing fair terraced gardens, where the masses of oleander

and magnolia, motionless as leaves in a picture, inlay alternately upon the blue sky their branching lightness of pale rose-colour, and deep green depths of shade, studded with balls of budding silver, and showing at intervals, through their framework of rich leaf and rubied flower, the far-away bends of the Arno beneath its slopes of olives, and the purple peaks of the Carrara mountains, tossing themselves against the western distance, where the streaks of motionless clouds burn above the Pisan sea. The traveller passes the Fiesolan ridge, and all is changed. The country is on a sudden lonely neither gardens nor flowers, nor glittering palace walls, only a grey extent of mountain ground tufted irregularly with ilex and olive.”* In a village on this lonely mountain ridge, Giotto was born, and here, amidst its grey and solemn scenery, he lived day by day, and kept his father’s sheep, awaiting the call which should make him great for ever among the world’s great men. And as, with Cimabue, he bade farewell to his mountain-home, and descended for the first time the Fiesolan ridge, Mr. Ruskin bids us fancy the thought

* ‘Giotto and his Works in Padua,’ by Professor Ruskin, p. 11 (Arundel Society publications). This book is out of print. It is much to be wished that the society would reprint a work so valuable and so little known.

and glance of the child destined to raise in Florence that "headstone of beauty," the Campanile, "among her towers of watch and war"—beholding the groves of Val d'Arno and—

"In the valley beneath, where white and wide,
And washed by the morning water-gold,
Florence lay out on the mountain side"; *

"the innumerable towers of the City of the Lily, the depths of his own heart yet hiding the fairest of them all."

Most of our readers know the story of Cimabue's first meeting with Giotto, then a child of ten years old. How, passing through Vespignano on his way to Bologna, Cimabue beheld a shepherd boy seated on the ground, drawing one of the sheep of his flock, with a flint, on the rock. Cimabue, marvelling at the boy's skill, asked him his name. "I am called Giotto," said the child, "and my father's name is Bondone." And then Cimabue asked the boy if he would go home with him and learn to be an artist, and the father, being very poor, gladly gave permission. So to Cimabue's home he went as an adopted son, and there learnt all that the master knew, and having grown to manhood, took his place

* Browning's 'Dramatic Lyrics': "Old Pictures in Florence."

for ever, when just twenty years of age, among the immortal painters of Italy.

And what, we may ask, before reviewing his life, was the special work of this young heaven-taught painter, and wherein lay his special greatness? Ghiberti's definition of Giotto's work was that he changed art from Greek into Latin ; and, taking that definition in its fullest sense, we may understand what Giotto really did for art in his day. He came, a peasant lad, from the ranks of the people, understanding their sympathies, knowing their thoughts and their life ; imbued with the popular religion, and versed in the popular legends. And so he was able, in the strength of his perfect training, and by the power of his matchless genius, so to teach and so to paint, that all Italy looked to him and followed him. He did indeed translate art from Greek to Latin ; from the oppressive solemnity of Byzantine theology, to the language which spoke to the ears and hearts of the people of his day. As Cimabue's meditations had taught him something more about the Mother of Christ than he could learn from Byzantine art, so the free, unfettered thoughts of the young Giotto, made him turn away even from the golden glory and sweet peace of Cimabue's enthroned Madonna, and strike yet a lower key in his Mother and Child, which

vibrated to the hearts of the Italian people as nothing had ever done. And so through the whole range of Christian history and tradition he went, illuminating it with pure thought and noble art; teaching the sacredness of all created things and the nobility of all Christian life. "As things are you shall see them, and the least with the greatest, because God made them."*

So, trained by Cimabue to be true workman, Christian, gentleman, Giotto went to begin his great career, in Rome, just before the famous jubilee of 1300. That year is memorable as a central date in the history of art as well as in the history of Christendom. The arts of sculpture, glass-painting, and illumination, attained their highest perfection in the years which circle around that date. Colour (without reference to light and shade which the Venetians developed so matchlessly in its relations to colour, two hundred years later) had reached that perfect harmony which we see in the French decorative art of the period. Architecture was approaching its culmination, year by year, in the progress of the great cathedrals of Italy; Naples, Florence, Siena, Orvieto, Prato, Perugia, Aosta, and others. Memorable also, in a doubtfully honourable way, is this date, in the history

* 'The Golden Gate,' p. 37.

of Papal Rome. Boniface VIII. was at the height of his power and ambition, and to all outward appearance the Roman Pontificate had reached its zenith of splendour in his person. Even to those who could look behind the scenes, the importance of the crisis, the reality that the Papal power was tottering to its fall, could hardly have seemed possible. The discontent of the refractory kings of France and England regarding the Pope's extraordinary claims, was smouldering in silence ; most of his enemies had been driven into exile ; and he held a weapon against the Franciscans, in their desire to obtain his leave to hold Church property, which prevented them from exercising their powerful influence against him. It was during this lull in the stormy history of the period, at the end of the last year of the thirteenth century, that Boniface proclaimed the great Jubilee for the ensuing centenary of the Christian era. It was inaugurated by the significant ceremony of the procession of the Pope through the streets, clad in imperial purple ; sword, sceptre, and globe carried before him, and the heralds proclaiming, "The sovereign successor of S. Peter and Vicar of Christ is the only king of the Romans." Throughout the year 1300 the roads were crowded with pilgrims from the remotest parts of Europe, journeying to offer their

homage at the throne of S. Peter, to receive the benediction of the Vicar of Christ, and to pour their wealth into his treasury. Two hundred thousand persons were in Rome at one time, and entrances were made in the walls to admit the people. It must indeed have been a spectacle of unparalleled magnificence. The Pope, surrounded by a princely court swelled by ambassadors from all parts of Europe ; all the wealth and intellect and power of the civilised world flocking to his feet ; giving his blessing as head of the Catholic Church, to science, art, and all forms of civilisation. It might have been a glorious sight, if all that glittered in the court of Rome that year had been unalloyed gold ; if he who filled the chair of S. Peter, and received the homage of the multitude, had not earned the hatred and fear of Europe by his treachery and rapacity.

Florence, too, at this date, was in the zenith of her mercantile prosperity, and her intellectual renown. One fact alone may show the respect in which her citizens were held. The ambassadors of France, England, Bohemia, Germany ; of Sicily, Genoa, Naples, Pisa, Verona, and other states, to the number of twelve ; of the Knights of S. John, and of the Khan of the Tartars, were all Florentines.* No less foremost

* 'De l'Art Chrétien,' vol. i. chap. iii. p. 185.

in art, Florence was represented by Arnolfo, come to Rome to carve the monuments of Honorius III. and Boniface VIII. ; by Villani, her great historian ; by Giotto in painting, and by Dante, greater than all, visiting Rome in the capacity of ambassador, and gathering the stores amidst the strange scenes around him, for his immortal Poem.

It was, however, as we have said, before the Jubilee, in 1298 or 1299, that Giotto made his first visit to Rome, invited there by the Cardinal Stefaneschi, nephew of Boniface VIII. Here he painted in the cardinal's church of S. Giorgio, and did other works for him, besides a fresco in S. John Lateran, representing Boniface VIII. proclaiming the jubilee,* from which it is concluded that he must have remained in Rome till after that event. A fragment of this painting, and a mosaic called the 'Navicella' or Boat of S. Peter (now so altered and damaged as to be scarcely recognisable as a work of the master), are all that remain of Giotto's work in Rome. The latter work is in the vestibule of the modern S. Peter's. It is symbolic of the Church, S. Peter being at the helm, while the other Apostles are praying in the midst of the tempest invoked by the powers of hell.

* Now in a side aisle. Pietro Cavallino assisted Giotto in this work.

It must have been in 1301, after his return from Rome, that Giotto painted those famous frescoes in the chapel of the Bargollo palace, where is the portrait of Dante, and which, to the disgrace of the Florentines, remained covered with an inch of whitewash, until a subscription was raised in England and elsewhere, in 1840, to defray the expense of partially uncovering them. East and west were painted Hell and Paradise ; and on the side walls, stories from the life of S. Mary Magdalene, and S. Mary of Egypt.

The celebrated story of the O of Giotto belongs, probably, rightly to this period,* and not to that of his first visit to Rome ; since there is no evidence of his having been summoned there by Boniface, and all his work of which we know, in Rome, was executed for the Cardinal S. Giorgio. The apparently strange and independent answer of Giotto to the Pope's ambassador, is more easily accounted for, if the circumstances occurred after Giotto had made his name in Rome, as he certainly had by the year 1303. Boniface died in that year, and was succeeded by Benedict XI., who, "at the express wish of Petrarch,"* it is said, sent to seek out the best artists in Florence. Giotto was in his workshop, and on the messenger stating

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. i. chap. ix. p. 271.

his errand, he took a crayon,* and placing a piece of vellum upright on the wall, and steadying his arm against his side, as a compass, he drew a circle with one sweep of his hand. "Is that all?" asked the messenger, doubtful, perhaps, whether Giotto were not practising on him his inveterate habit of joking. "Nay," said Giotto, "it is enough, and more than enough; send it with the other drawings, and you will see how it will be esteemed;" for Giotto knew that none but a perfectly disciplined hand could have performed the feat, and perhaps thought that his works in Rome might have witnessed sufficiently to his power, if the Pope really wanted him. This is the celebrated story which gave rise to the proverb, "as round as the O of Giotto," a play on the double meaning of the word *tondo*, which is used to express stupidity or dulness of comprehension. Of the works which Vasari states that Giotto did at Avignon, where the Papal residence then was, no traces whatever remain; and as Benedict XI. only lived nine months, it is most probable that he never went there.†

* Not a brush, with which, as Professor Ruskin explained, the feat would have been impossible. See 'Giotto and his Works in Padua.' (Don't; but practise with a camel's hair brush till you can do it. I knew nothing of brush work proper when I wrote that essay on Padua. —ED.)

† Crowe and Cavalcaselle, p. 272.

In 1305 or 1306, Giotto was invited to Padua, as the acknowledged master of Italian art, to paint the Arena chapel, which had been built by Enrico Scroveggio, one of a fraternity called the 'Knights of S. Mary,' instituted to promote the greater veneration of the blessed Virgin. The chapel was probably built for the use of the fraternity, since the history of the blessed Virgin was painted by Giotto with all the traditional details, on the walls. A barrel vault roofs the chapel, which is formed of a single aisle, the chancel being only marked by an arch; the light enters from six small windows on one side. In the arrangement of subjects, Giotto adhered to the ancient tradition, than which indeed it is difficult to imagine anything more imposing or sublime. The vault is a deep blue, studded with gold stars, and medallioned with heads of saints. Over the chancel arch, the Lord is enthroned in glory; beneath, on each side, a triple series of pictures enclosed in painted framework of delicate ornament, representing the entire histories of Christ and His blessed Mother, beginning with the Annunciation, which occupies the nearest place to the enthroned figure on the arch. Lower still, the Virtues and Vices stand as single figures; noble conceptions, and worthy of the tradition that they were the result of the united thought of Dante and Giotto.

One is fain to wonder how, such lofty symbolism once expressed by the language of art, the puerile and unmeaning types which have prevailed in later ages, could ever have been tolerated. Compare Sir Joshua Reynolds' idea of charity with Giotto's for instance. In the well-known design for the Oxford window, Charity is personified by a woman, surrounded and engrossed by a number of children of various sizes and ages; Reynolds' idea of charity evidently having never soared beyond the occupation of taking care of the poor. But Giotto knew that S. Paul meant something more than that when he wrote his sublime chapter on charity; and he proceeded to think the matter out for himself. He placed Charity nearest of all to the Lord in His glory, on Whom she turns her rapt gaze as she offers Him the burning heart of a purified love. You must love God first and best of all, thinks Giotto, before you can see Him in His creatures. Then in her other hand he puts a vase of flowers, for love, joy, and peace, the first "fruits of the Spirit," are lovely even in their earthly bloom; a garland is on her brow, for does not Love move through creation, a spirit crowned with ever-renewing flowers? Finally, the triple flame on her brow, tells of the undying fire of her perfect love to God and man. Faith, diademed with the "crown of life," stands

resting the Cross of Christ on a prostrate idol, and holding in her other hand the Creed of Christendom. Hope is symbolized winged, erect, grasping after the crown held over her, and turning as in expectation towards the porch. For there, over the entrance broken by three small windows, from which Archangels hold back the curtains, is the Lord returning in judgment; a stern reminder of that which should surely come to each one of those who day by day, and generation after generation, might pass beneath the portals. Christ in a glory borne by cherubim and seraphim, fills the centre, legions of warrior angels around Him; His right hand held out in blessing, His left in rejection. The archangels' trumpets are sounding to the four winds of heaven; the apostles are seated on their thrones. The blessed Virgin, not now enthroned with Christ, but, with a beautiful thought, heading the great procession of the redeemed, leads S. Anna by the hand, and is followed by the saints and martyrs and all the blessed. The "sign of the Son of Man" is held by two angels in the midst, separating the elect from the accursed. A torrent of fire issues from the feet of Christ, in awful symbolism of the wrath of the Lamb, surrounding and consuming the lost souls.

Such was the work of Giotto in the most perfect

monument which has been spared us. And if we fill that chapel, in thought, with the group which spent hour after hour there through the long summer days one year about five hundred years ago, there will not be much wanting to make us deem it one of the sacred spots of Italy. For there came Dante,* to sojourn awhile near his friend, and there also was Giotto's wife, and his children at their play in the bright sunshine outside the porch.

It would seem that this chapel was considered to be the crowning effort of Giotto's genius; for commissions flowed in on him from all sides after this. He painted at Ravenna, where is a lovely ceiling of his in a chapel of S. Giovanni Evangelista; at Peruzzi, where, in S. Croce, are some of his best frescoes; and at Assisi, where the frescoes of S. Francesco were still unfinished. Here he painted the vault over the altar of the lower church with allegorical representations in honour of the religious life, and of S. Francis, who appears glorified amidst groups of angels; and also the life of S. Francis on the walls of the upper church. It is remarkable that a large portion of Giotto's work was done for the Franciscan order. He painted in all the three great

* Lord Lindsay, vol. ii. let. iv. p. 199.

churches of that order, Assisi, Florence, and Padua ; besides working for them in Rimini, Verona, Pisa, and Ravenna. The prestige of the intellectual and spiritual power which had been wielded by the Franciscans through the first half-century of its existence, remained with it still ; and the wonderful organisation which had enabled it to minister to the requirements of all ranks of society, had won the popular sympathies of the age. Dante belonged to their 'third order,' instituted as a bond of union with secular life, and perhaps this too may have tended to bring Giotto into greater sympathy with a religious development which was scarcely in itself akin to his bright, joyous spirit, and energetic mind. It was well for the completeness of Giotto's work that his mind should have been thus attuned to the contemplation of the life of the great ascetic ; for it was a part of his work to unite and balance the conflicting elements of the religious and secular lives. The passion which had been roused among the people by S. Francis and S. Dominic, for the monastic life, was growing into unhealthy morbidness, and threatened to overpower the calm teaching of the Gospel of Christ, and to detract fatally from the sacredness of Christian life in the world. Had Giotto known the value of either life less, his teaching would

have been incomplete. It was no mere coincidence that Giotto should have lived so near within the influence of the hero-saint of mediæval Christendom, and while his glowing words and deeds were yet on men's lips, and that his daily life should have been lived as the contemporary and friend of the greatest poet of the Christian era. It must be that Giotto was greater through the lives of these two men than he otherwise would have been. For while Dante, the great mystic, taught the practical mind of Giotto to fathom the depths of Christian symbolism, and inspired some of his happiest conceptions, the noble story of the self-sacrificing monk of Assisi taught him to reverence the sacredness of the religious life, and inspired him to prolong in men's ears, like an echo, the living poem of the life of S. Francis.

About 1330, Giotto was invited to Naples, to work for King Robert the Good. For him Giotto painted the great hall of the palace with historical scenes, and also many chapels. All are vanished, and the only vestige of his work there, is a fresco of the miracle of the loaves and fishes in a hall of the old Franciscan convent, now used as a furniture shop.* King Robert

* See Crowe and Cavalcaselle. The paintings in the church of S. Incoronata are no longer believed to be his, since it is said that the church was built after Giotto's death.

seems to have felt the charm which he exercised over all who knew him, and treated him as a friend, visiting him while painting, and holding conversations with him. And Giotto, says Vasari, "had ever his repartee and *bon mot* ready, and held him there fascinated alike with the magic of his pencil and the pleasantry of his tongue."

In 1334 he returned to Florence, "rich in honour and with sufficient worldly wealth," Vasari tells us; and was made *maestro* of the Cathedral works, and honoured with the citizenship and a pension of a hundred florins. The Cathedral, left unfinished by Arnolfo, was almost rebuilt and considerably enlarged from Giotto's designs. The façade, erected some years after his death—one of the loveliest things in Italy it must have been—was wantonly destroyed by the caprice of the Grand Duke Francis in 1588; but the Campanile is alone enough to be the monument of Giotto and the glory of Florence. With a spirit worthy of their predecessors, the Signoria decreed that the tower should be built "so as to exceed in magnificence, height, and excellence of workmanship, whatsoever in that kind had been achieved of old by the Greeks and Romans in the time of their utmost power and greatness." And on the 18th of July the stone was laid by the Archbishop with great solemnity, a

procession of the clergy, signoria, and an immense multitude, following.

How Giotto fulfilled the lofty mandate of the Florentine people, we know and may still see, in that "sunny surface of glowing jasper," which Mr. Ruskin has called the model and mirror of perfect architecture. A citizen of Verona, regarding the progress of the building, and observing the costliness with which the work was conducted, exclaimed that the city was taxing her strength too far, and that the resources of two great monarchs would be insufficient to complete it. For which freedom of expression he was summarily imprisoned by the signoria; and after two months, was conducted through the treasury, to prove to him that the Florentine people could afford, if they chose, to build the whole city of marble.

Giotto's model of the tower was so perfect that every stone was marked on it; and it was completed after his death from the design, Andrea Pisano carving the bas-reliefs.*

The four sides of the tower show the four stages of human progress, from the Creation. On the west

* The tradition that Giotto carved two of the divisions himself is now disputed.

front is the patriarchal state, on the south the national, on the east colonisation, and on the north the development of intellectual and spiritual faculties.

The first division contains the creation of Adam and Eve, and, passing over their life in Paradise and Fall, is continued in their occupations of delving and spinning. Cain and Abel represent the germs of the active and contemplative, the secular and religious lives. Jabal, "the father of such as dwell in tents," comes next, his sheep around him, as representing the first principles of arts and professions; and then Tubal-cain, "the instructor of artificers in brass and iron." Then, the Flood being over, and the temperature of the earth changed, according to early Christian tradition, and meat and wine being given to man, Noah, as a husbandman, lies asleep—or, as Professor Ruskin maintains,* drunk—under a vine.

The State, or Nation, occupies the second division. Astronomy, the earliest science, is figured by an old man.† Building, the first art, and the primary step

* I don't "maintain" anything of the sort; I *know* it. He is as drunk as a man can be—and the expression of drunkenness given with deliberate and intense skill—as on the angle of the Ducal Palace of Venice. (ED.)

† Above which are seen, by the astronomy of his heart, the heavenly host, represented above the stars. (ED.)

towards settled national life, next ; then weaving and taming of horses. Legislation appears as an old man, holding a code of laws to a kneeling figure ; and the dispersion of Babel, and consequent formation of languages, by Dædalus flying.

On the east face is Colonisation, introduced by three figures voyaging in a boat. Hercules, standing over the dead Antæus, probably represents the clearing of the earth from monsters and giants. Then comes agriculture ; then a waggon and horses, drawing four persons, which Lord Lindsay takes to mean the increase of comfort and luxury. At this period, representing probably the idea of God's first revelation of Himself to man, through the Israelites, and the consequent conditions of a higher life, the symbolic figure of the sacred Lamb is placed. After this come architecture, sculpture, and painting, now sanctified by the inspiration of God, and dedication to His worship ; grammar, philosophy, poetry — with its doubly symbolic image of Orpheus—the sciences, and music.*

Of the delicate shafts and crystal traceries, "coloured like a morning cloud, and chased like a

* A fuller description of these sculptures may be found in Lord Lindsay's book.

sea-shell," which rise tier on tier above all this wealth of thought, Giotto never saw the gleam and the glory. In the midst of that and other great works, and ere the first story of the tower was quite completed, on the 8th of January 1336, he was called to his rest, suddenly, and, it would seem, prematurely, for he was still in the fullness of strength, and not more than sixty years of age. "Beloved by all who knew him in life, regretted in his death by all who had ever heard his name," * he passed behind the veil to see face to face that which he had striven so earnestly to see through the glass darkly. His lifetime had been filled with meditating and teaching of the earthly life of the Man of Sorrows; and he closed his eyes at last, we may not doubt, to open them on the King in His beauty, and his ears, to quicken to the words, "Well done."

We have lingered lovingly over this brief sketch of the life and work of the great master, feeling the while its inadequacy to express the power or the beauty of the one or the other. It is not often given to man so to begin and finish his course with joy, so to make life "one grand, sweet song." He passed to and fro through Italy for forty years, filling it as he went

| * Vasari.

with holy thoughts ; himself rising as he went from strength to strength, as good a Christian as he was a noble painter. A pioneer in a new world, he has been called ; "the Adam of a new Eden freshly planted in earth's wilderness." * Reverencing all Christian tradition, he never wittingly encumbered it with false or over-wrought teaching ; a teacher of practical Christianity, he transformed old truisms into living truths ; the first master of realistic art, he substituted, once for all, the noble faces and forms of the men and women among whom he walked, for the lifeless models of the earlier schools. He was not, indeed, an ideal painter like Fra Angelico, nor do his pictures glow with such gem-like colours, nor his faces gleam with such unearthly light. Less contemplative than the Sienese, less spiritual than Fra Angelico, he painted what he saw, with all the force of his strong practical mind, more really truthful than either, because holding truth with a more catholic comprehensiveness. He was not a monk, but a man living in the world, in no sense of it, singularly unspotted from it, but loving it and rejoicing in it ; his keen sense of humour never degenerating into coarseness, or sullied by irreverence. "I do not

* Lord Lindsay.

know," says Professor Ruskin, "in the annals of art, such another example of happy, practical, unerring, benevolent power."*

Lord Lindsay has reminded us that, like David when called to his kingdom, Giotto was keeping his father's flock, when he too was called to his life's work. Professor Ruskin has continued the thought in his reflections on the life of Giotto, and the causes which led to his greatness. "Remember all that he became ; count the sacred thoughts with which he filled the heart of Italy ; ask those who followed him what they learned at his feet ; and when you have numbered his labours, and received their testimony, if it seem to you that God had verily poured out upon this His servant no common nor restrained portion of His Spirit, and that he was indeed a king among the children of men, remember also that the legend upon his crown was that of David's:—'I took thee from the sheep-cote, and from following the sheep.' "†

* 'Giotto and his Works in Padua,' p. 17.

† 'Seven Lamps of Architecture : ' "Lamp of Beauty."

PICTURES OF THE SIENESE SCHOOL IN
BRITISH GALLERIES.

Liverpool Institute 1 and 2. Heads of two Saints.
3. Blessed Virgin holding a
Crucifix. 4. The Coronation of
the Virgin. 5. The Crucifixion.
6. The Descent of the Holy
Ghost.

UGOLINO.

Wooton Hall Two Saints.
Rev. Mr. Russell 1. Predella of his great altar-piece
for S. Croce, representing the
Resurrection. 2. Two Angels.

SIMONE MEMMI.

Liverpool Institute Finding of the Saviour in the
Temple.
Oxford Gallery Crucifixion and Pietà.

THE LORENZETTI.

Wooton Hall 1. SS. Peter, Paul, and Katherine.
2. Five Saints.

FLORENTINE SCHOOL.

GIOTTO.

Liverpool Institute 1. Three women and S. John
Baptist. 2. Daughter of Hero-
dias.
Duke of Northumberland .. Half a diptych representing four
subjects.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DAWN OF THE RENAISSANCE.

	Born.	Died.		Born.	Died.
Andrea Pisano	1270	1345	Brunelleschi ..	1377	1445
Orcagna ..	{ Circa }	1376	Ghiberti	1381	1453
	{ 1329 }		Masaccio	1402	1428
Donatello	1386	1466			

ANDREA PISANO, the pupil of Giovanni and the friend of Giotto, brought up amidst the ancient art of Pisa, and fulfilling his career in Florence during her most splendid age, links together the earlier and later schools of Tuscany, and carries on the history of Italian art to the culminating age of Orcagna. After travelling to Venice, where he superintended the carving of a part of S. Mark's façade, he settled in Florence, having already won the reputation of being the first bronze-worker in Italy. He was Giotto's chosen associate in the work of the Campanile; executed the four Prophets in niches, and the group of the Transfiguration over the door, modelled Giotto's designs, and continued the work after his

death. Of his work on the destroyed façade, there remain the four Doctors—their names changed into the four poets of Italy, to suit the taste of the Renaissance—which stand at the foot of the hill leading to the Poggio Imperiale, and a mutilated statue of Boniface VIII. in a corner of the Strozzi gardens. His great work, the Baptistery gate of Florence, was carried on at the same time as the Campanile work, and occupied nine years. It once filled the principal entrance, but was removed to make room for Ghiberti's door, and is now in the south doorway. Twenty large bas-reliefs in square panels, containing the entire history of S. John Baptist, compose this beautiful work; but the frieze was executed by Ghiberti, who made his own first door after the model, following its form and arrangement. The Signoria of Florence testified their gratitude and admiration when the door was completed, by visiting it in state, and by conferring the privilege of citizenship on Andrea. Here we may see the consummation of the Pisan school of sculpture, its dramatic power perfected by the genius of Giotto, and its realism restrained by his reverence. Andrea was not insignificant as an architect, and though little of his work remains, it is recorded that he fortified the Palazzo Vecchio, built villas, castles, and palaces in the district of Florence,

and began the baptistery of Pistoja. The slab—now lost—which covered his grave near the pulpit in the cathedral, told that he worked in gold and ivory, as well as bronze and marble.

About 1329 was born Andrea, third son of Cione, a skilled goldsmith of Florence, whose work still remains in the beautiful silver altar of the Baptistery ; but whose name is more immortal in that of his son. Andrea studied art first under his father, working in his trade, and then under his elder brother Bernardo, from whom he never separated, as far as we know ; their relations only being reversed by time, and the elder being content to work under the younger brother. Andrea is first mentioned in the archives of Florence, in 1357, as Andrea di Cione Archagnuolo, by the last of which names, signifying the 'Archangel,' and gradually corrupted into Orcagna, the great artist is chiefly known. He studied with Andrea Pisano for some time, learning from him all the best traditions of Giotto's school, and becoming under him the central master of Gothic art. In his wonderful dramatic power, and supreme imagination, he became the master of Michael Angelo, and in his intense spirituality and tenderness of thought, the tutor of Fra Angelico. Of his work and life we know less, perhaps, than of those of any of the great Florentine artists ; and although Vasari says that

Florence was once full of his pictures, the only precious remains are the frescoes of Hell and Paradise, and the altar-piece of the Strozzi Chapel in S. Maria Novella. The triptych in the National Gallery was painted for S. Piero Maggiore.

In 1355, Orcagna succeeded Taddeo Gaddi as architect to the new church of Or San Michele, the beautiful external Gothic of which is, no doubt, in its main features, the work of Taddeo Gaddi, though perhaps Orcagna directed the internal decorations. Arnolfo's Loggia had been burnt down in 1304, and the famous picture, of reputed miraculous power, had brought in such wealth to the brotherhood founded in its honour, that they were able to give the commission for the splendid tabernacle which is its glory, and the central work of Italian Gothic. It is of white marble, inlaid and enriched in every imaginable way, rising up to the very roof of the church with its statues and imagery, and crowned with the Archangel Michael; relievos, intaglios, mosaics, and enamels welded together into a marvel of beauty of form and colour. It was finished in 1359. About the same time Orcagna also accepted the post of *maestro* to the Cathedral of Orvieto, the splendid façade of which, unapproachable among the cathedrals of Italy, was nearly completed. The quarries were ransacked for choice marbles, and the best artists that

could be procured superintended the work, companies of masons, painters, and mosaicists working under them. An additional historical interest attaches itself to this beautiful cathedral, in the tradition that the reputed miracle of Bolsena was the immediate cause of its erection, and the doctrine of the Sacrament, for this reason, the leading idea in its decoration. It was with great reluctance that the Florentines allowed Orcagna to visit Orvieto for such long periods as was necessary for his work there. He was recalled once to continue his work at Or San Michele, and then went back to Orvieto, pledging himself to return in a year. Disputes arose, at length, between the two cities on the matter, and on the completion of the mosaic on which Orcagna was engaged, the contract was dissolved.

The Loggia dei Lanzi, so long regarded as Orcagna's work, and interesting as the first Renaissance building of Italy, is now supposed to have been built eight years after his death, by one Cione Benci, whose name occasioned the mistake. In the round arches, "new to those times,"* the pilaster, Corinthian

* See Vasari.

Vasari is an ass with precious things in his panniers—but you must not ask his opinion on any matter. The round arches new to those times had been the universal structure form in all Italy, Roman or Lombard—feebly and reluctantly pointed in the thirteenth century—

capitals, and classic sculpture, we see the fully developed character of the Renaissance, and it seems strange that the tradition of its being Orcagna's design should have been accepted so unhesitatingly.

The great frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa, of the Triumph of Death and Last Judgment, which have, more than anything else, contributed to make his name immortal, are denied to him by modern critics, and attributed to Pietro Lorenzetti or to another Andrea, with whose name it is asserted that Orcagna's has been confused. The writer, however, has Professor Ruskin's permission to record his conviction that the Campo Santo frescoes are by Orcagna's hand. These paintings, and those of the

and occasionally as in the Campo Santo of Pisa—and Orcagna's own Or San Michele, standing within three hundred yards of the Loggia arches "new to those times"—filled with tracery, itself composed of intersecting round arches. Now it does not matter two soldi to the history of art who *built*—but who designed and carved the Loggia. It is out and out the grandest in Italy—and its archaic sculptures of the Virtues are now as inimitable by Florence as the archaic virtues themselves are impracticable and inconceivable. I don't vouch for its being Orcagna's, nor do I vouch for the Campo Santo frescoes being his; I have never specially studied him; nor do I know what men of might there were to work with or after him. But I know the Loggia to be mighty architecture of Orcagna's style and time; and the Last Judgment and Triumph of Death in the Campo Santo to be the sternest lessons written on the walls of Tuscany; and worth more study alone than English travellers usually give to Pisa, Lucca, Pistoja, and Florence altogether. (Ed.)

Strozzi Chapel, were the great works of the age, inspired with the same thoughts, and it is hard to believe, on insufficient proof, that they were not imagined by the same master, the passionate admirer of Dante,* and the interpreter of his teaching. It was now little more than half a century since the sublime poem of the Divine Comedy had appeared, and already it had become the national poem of Italy, forming and possessing the popular mind, and inspiring the popular art. Explanations of it were made in the churches, as of the Bible; it was the regular theme for the Sunday and festival discourses in the Cathedral of Florence,† and the Council of Constance even commissioned a monk to translate and comment on it in Latin.‡ How much the stern realisation of Dante in depicting the horrors of Hell and the torments of the lost, affected the mind of the age, concerning the 'four last things' of Catholic theology, it is impossible to determine. Other causes led also to a gradually increasing morbidness in the mind of Christendom, on these subjects. Each of the five great painters of Italy, who were called to paint the awful scene of the Last Judgment, borrowed the imagery of

* Orcagna was a profound student of the Divine Comedy.

† 'De l'Art Chrétien,' vol. ii. chap. xi. p. 326.

‡ The Venetians read it in Latin.

Dante, and reproduced his teaching. Yet how different does the subject become in the several hands of Giotto, Orcagna, Fra Angelico, Michael Angelo, and Tintoret. Each threw the colouring of his own individual mind over the great subject of his contemplation, and became no less the reflex of his age and the phase of thought which pervaded it, than the scholar of Dante. The continuous state of war, tumult, oppression, and persecution, in which the whole civilised world was involved, had produced at this period a phase of thought akin to religious despair, which found vent in morbid demonstrations such as the ghastly procession of the 'White Penitents' through Europe, and the fearful tragedy-play of the 'Dance of Death'; and, though in more legitimate degree, in such representations as Orcagna's, of Death, Hell, and Judgment. The popular theology was tending to the belief that God—if indeed He ruled over this miserable world at all—was but a stern Avenger, relentless as the Jove of the heathen mythology; such in fact did the person of our Lord actually become, in the hands of Michael Angelo—"a Jupiter Tonans," as M. Didron* has said, "prepared to chastise the human race." It would be

* 'Christian Iconography' (Bohn's Ed.), p. 256.

interesting to follow the leading characteristics of the different representations of that awful event in the different periods of Christian art.* From the earliest appearance of this subject, amidst the darkness and misery of the eleventh century—first portrayed by the hunted fugitives of Venetia on the walls of their rough-hewn cathedral of Torcello—it was dwelt on with increasing solemnity, and worked out with deepening intensity, till the era of Christian art closed.

The Christian Church had passed out of that period of simple love and purity of life, which instinctively dwelt on the dearer mysteries of the faith; no longer symbolising the Lord as the Good Shepherd tending His sheep among green pastures, or as the Lamb feeding His ransomed flocks beside the still waters of Paradise. The nobler sons of the Church had been driven to seek a refuge from the turmoil of religious strife, and the temptations of a degenerate Christianity, in the cloisters of a stern asceticism; and the glowing love of S. Francis must be perfected through a terrible and mysterious self-discipline. It is as the avenging Judge—the ‘*Rex tremendæ majestatis*,’—that the Christian Church now represents her Lord: it is as the ‘*Dies Iræ*,’ and of a world

* ‘Christian Art and Symbolism,’ lect. iii. p. 86. See also Didron’s ‘Christian Iconography,’ on this subject.

wrapt in flames, that she looks for the dawn of the everlasting day.*

Much of this temper of mind is visible in the two great pictures of the Triumph of Death and Last Judgment in the Campo Santo, though ennobled indeed, and sanctified by the sublime thoughts which form the key-notes, and before the power of which the materialism of parts fades away into obscurity.

In the first of these two pictures, the prominent group is a company of rich gay worldlings sitting under an orange-grove ; troubadours playing, and Cupids flying around them. The lady with her lap-dog, and the young man with his hawk, serve alike to show the unconsciousness of coming calamity in the actors in this scene of careless life, and to mark still clearer the contrast with the awful approaching figure. For, hovering close above them—bat-winged, claw-footed, with long streaming hair—is the phantom of Death, her scythe swung back to strike. Near this group, on the line which Death is passing, are a group of the poor, and sick, and wretched of the earth, imploring her to stay her progress and end their pain.

* The magnificent sequence of the 'Dies Iræ,' one of the earliest and most sublime expressions of this tone of thought, dates from about the middle of the thirteenth century. It is attributed to Thomas of Celano, the disciple of S. Francis.

Between the two groups are a heap of dead and dying, mown down by Death in her flight—kings and cardinals, young men and maidens—for whose souls angels and devils hover round; here and there an angel rescuing a soul from the clutch of a demon who claims it. In another part of the picture are hermits of the desert, one of whom * shows three corpses lying on the road to an approaching gay cavalcade, who, startled, turn aside, not in awe but in disgust,—as Orcagna evidently wishes to enforce his lesson to the careless, by emphasising. The whole picture is filled with poetical inscriptions, which increase its expressional intensity; in the middle a scroll is held by two angels, containing the warning, that since neither wisdom, nor riches, nor courage, nor argument, can avail to turn aside the stroke of death, man should watch unceasingly, lest death come suddenly, and find him in mortal sin.

The other great picture of the Campo Santo is the Last Judgment: the Resurrection of the Dead, the triumph of Life over Death, coming fitly by the side of the Triumph of Death.

Our Lord and the blessed Virgin are seated side

* Macarius the Hermit, to whose name and legend is attributed the origin of the 'Danse Macabre.'

by side ;* six angels, bearing the instruments of the Passion, are around ; the Apostles seated round the throne. Below, an archangel holds the open scroll from which the world is judged ; and, crouched at his feet, muffling his face in his mantle, is another angel, probably the supreme guardian Angel of mankind, mourning the loss of the souls committed to his charge. To the right and left the trumpets are sounding. Lower still, the dead are just risen from the open graves, S. Michael presiding over the separation of the bad from the good. Here a monk rises among the blest, but is sternly motioned away ; there a young man, uncertain which way to turn, is led away by an angel ; between these two, King Solomon is rising in bewilderment, and we are left to conjecture his fate. The redeemed pass on in bands towards the throne : Adam and Eve and the patriarchs first ; then the founders of the monastic orders ; then kings and queens, cardinals, prelates, and

* The subject of the coronation of the blessed Virgin was developed from the ' Rosary ' of S. Dominic, and does not appear in art till the fourteenth century. It follows that it is not until this period that we find the beautiful idea of her leading the procession of the redeemed, abandoned, and her enthronement with the Saviour in the Judgment substituted. Beautiful as is Orcagna's Madonna as she turns in pleading to her Divine Son, one must regard the innovation with profound regret.

religious, all intently gazing on the Lord. On the other side is the gulf of fire ; the agony of the lost depicted on their faces. Perhaps this picture brings to our minds a more terrible realisation of the awfulness of the Day of Judgment, than any other representation within the range of art. The depth of expression in the faces is undisturbed by violence or extravagance of gesture or action, such as we see in Michael Angelo's great picture of this subject ; all restlessness stilled in the awe of that unimaginable moment. The probation of life is over. The day so long looked for, feared, shrunk from, is come at last ; that terrible day of clouds and thick darkness, of which the words of prophecy seem to fail in their effort to set forth its awfulness, and which all types have foreshadowed but faintly. The angel has proclaimed that "It is done" : the great white Throne has been set, and the books read, and the condemned are lost in depth of sorrow and confusion, as they turn away silently from the face of Christ. But the redeemed are absorbed in the peace so new, so inconceivable, of being safe for evermore ; rejoicing in the Beatific Vision ; S. Michael smiling his welcome home to each new denizen of the Heavenly City.

Little as we know of Orcagna's life, he seems to have left a memory behind him of having been

"pleasant, courteous, and amiable in thought, word, and deed,"* and to have been, like Giotto, greatly beloved among his own people. As a moral and spiritual teacher, none save Giotto ever equalled him among the painters of Italy; none united such stern uncompromising sense of the greatness of the truths he set forth, with such tenderness and exquisite perception of beauty. The "intense solemnity and energy in the sublimest groups of his figures," says Professor Ruskin, "fading away as he touches inferior subjects, indicates that his home was among the archangels, and his rank among the first of the sons of men." And if his lot was to dwell more than others on lessons so awful, that human thought must fail on one side or the other, in contemplating them, yet the impossibility of the subject is but another proof of the mightiness of the soul which could so contemplate Death and Judgment, as that Hope and Love should not be lost in Faith.

One more name we must briefly mention, as uniting the old era and the new, though belonging strictly in date to the early Renaissance; Donatello or Donati. He was only sixteen when the competition for the baptistery gates of Florence

* Lord Lindsay, vol. iii. letter vi. p. 148.

took place, and therefore Vasari erred in asserting that he was one of the competitors. Donatello was the friend, and in part scholar of Brunelleschi, and accompanied him to Rome in 1402, the two making drawings of every bit of classic work which they could find, and measuring and examining them with accurate care. After two or three years spent thus, Donatello returned to Florence, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of classical sculpture, although free from the taint of that pagan school of thought which was already gaining ground in Rome. His beautiful S. George, the ideal of Christian chivalry, is in Or San Michele, where also are his statues of S. Peter and S. Paul. Less Christian in feeling is his tomb of the Cardinal Branacci at Naples, where the beautiful old Pisan thought of the angels drawing back the curtains to look on the face of the dead, is finally vulgarised, and genii take the place of angels, and caryatides supersede the simple pillars of Gothic sculpture. To Donatello belongs the doubtful honour of introducing, for the first time, into Christian art, the naked figure; and however beautiful we may think his David of the Uffizi, we cannot forget that it inaugurated the triumph of paganism first in Florentine art. Donatello was the chosen friend and companion of Cosmo, the first and best of the Medici;

and to him was entrusted, by Cosmo, the arrangement and restoration of his splendid collection of antique sculpture in the Medici gardens. The spirit of the Renaissance fatally shadowed his art, and the age in which he lived moulded him to a great extent ; but his influence on art could never have been evil ; and as a true Christian man, humble and charitable, pure and gentle, in an evil generation, none ever left a more spotless name behind him.*

Lorenzo Ghiberti was born in 1381. He too was the son of a Florentine goldsmith, and educated in that branch of art, but early in life showed his talent for sculpture, spending his spare time in casting small figures, and in imitating old coins. To him we owe the first history of Italian art, which, as M. Rio remarks, would be more valuable than it is, if he had not devoted himself to the study of classical authors to such an extent, as to crowd his history with their extracts, to its great detriment. The first thing which is known of him is, that when about twenty, he painted frescoes in the palace of Carlo Malatesta, lord of Rimini. From thence he returned to compete for the Baptistery door of Florence. After the great plague of Florence in 1400, the guild of merchants

* Perkins' 'Tuscan Sculptors,' vol. i. book iii. chap. v. p. 160.

resolved to make the gift of a new bronze door for the Baptistery ; and a sum of money was given to each competing artist, with the order to return within a year, with his model. The designs of Brunelleschi and Ghiberti were considered the best, but while the judges were hesitating between them, Brunelleschi withdrew from the competition, using his influence in favour of Ghiberti's design, which he frankly acknowledged to be the best ;* an act of generosity by which, as Vasari says, " he was more highly honoured than by conducting the work himself to the greatest perfection." Ghiberti arranged the bas-reliefs of the door after the model of that of Andrea ; filling twenty panels with the history of our Lord, and the rest with the Evangelists, and Doctors of the Church, and putting a border of leaves round the whole.

The first line of subjects begins with the Annunciation, in which we may mark the first departure from the traditional treatment of that subject, in giving a gesture and expression of alarm to the blessed Virgin, as she receives the angel's message. Then come the Nativity ; the Adoration of the Magi, which is wonderfully rendered with its groups of men and

* The two models are in the Uffizi, and Ghiberti's is undoubtedly superior to Brunelleschi's.

horses ; and the Finding in the Temple. Above these are the Baptism and Temptation of Christ, the Devil standing in fear, as though conscious of the Divine Presence, which also is a departure from the tradition of the Church, that Satan knew not at that time the Divinity of our Lord. The Casting out of the Money-changers, and S. Peter walking on the Water, complete this row of subjects. Above these are the Transfiguration, Resurrection of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, Last Supper, Agony in the Garden, Betrayal, Flagellation, in which the contortion of form is for the first time painfully insisted on ; the carrying of Christ before Pilate, Bearing the Cross, Meeting the Marys, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Descent of the Holy Ghost. In the Crucifixion, the blessed Virgin and St. John, on each side, are not, as hitherto, "standing by the cross of Jesus," according to the Gospel narrative, or as in more symbolic treatment, kneeling in adoration, but seated, engrossed in overwhelming grief.

This work occupied Ghiberti, with other commissions, for twenty years ; and when it was finished, the admiration of the Florentines for it, caused the removal of Andrea's door to the south porch, in order to make room for the new one. Soon after its completion, Ghiberti received the order for another door,

to complete the set for the Baptistery. A series of pictures from the Old Testament history occupies this second door, with statuettes of prophets and saints in niches, and a beautifully wrought border of foliage mingled with animals and flowers around it. Here also we see the departure from ancient tradition.* Adam rises not into life at the word of God, but touches His hand, as though to assist himself in rising. Eve springs from the shoulder of Adam, thus rising more gracefully than in the older representations, a group of angels sustaining her; the serpent and the tree are almost out of sight, lest they should interfere with the grouping. The whole is of a more advanced phase of Renaissance, and a more undisguised naturalism, than the first door. On these two works was founded the school of Renaissance sculpture; Raffaello and Michael Angelo studied and admired them; the one making them his models for grouping and drapery, the other saying that they were fit to be the gates of Paradise. So the doors of the old Tuscan Baptistery closed the history of that art which had been inaugurated on its grand old walls two hundred years before. Mathematical precision instead of thought, grace instead of spirituality—such were the

* See No. vi. of 'Mornings in Florence'; not yet published.

elements which Ghiberti introduced into art. For the man himself, we know him to have been an immeasurably lesser, meaner man, than either of his contemporaries in the early Renaissance. He repaid the generosity of Brunelleschi in the matter of the bronze door, by the meanest selfishness ; causing himself to be associated with that great architect in the construction of the dome, while knowing himself to be ignorant of the necessary science ; and when forced to resign, insisting on being paid a salary until the time of the contract elapsed. Ghiberti's powers of dramatic representation, and of delicate manipulation, were of a high order ; and his technical excellences have thus caused his inferiority in all the greater qualities which make an artist, to be overlooked. Gates of no Paradise were these of his ; neither of the unconscious innocence of that first Eden, nor of the yet more glorious Paradise of forgotten evil, of which the first was but the faint shadow.

Brunelleschi, the immortal architect of the dome of Florence Cathedral, was born in 1377. He is the great representative and embodiment of that reaction in favour of classical taste, which was so shortly to revolutionise art, and reign triumphant in its paganism under the name of the Renaissance. He was, like so many artists of that century, a goldsmith,

but soon forsook that branch of art in his absorbing passion for architecture, geometry, and perspective. And, not content to rest in the abstruseness of mathematical science, he also studied Dante deeply, and devoted much time to philosophical studies, joining, Vasari tells us, in the public disputations of the learned men of Florence.

After the competition for the Baptistery gates, Brunelleschi determined to go to Rome for the purpose of studying the classical models there; and, as before mentioned, he took with him the young Donatello. It seems to have been the dream of Brunelleschi's life from his youth, to discover a method of constructing a dome to complete Arnolfo's work, which had never been attempted since his death; and he pondered long and silently on the great problem, gazing on the vault of the Pantheon at Rome. The two friends were called the treasure-seekers, and were the objects of much wonder and amusement; wandering about negligently clothed, digging for capitals and remains of ancient sculpture, Brunelleschi supporting himself the while by setting precious stones for the Roman jewellers. In 1407 he was obliged to return to Florence for his health, and, by what seems a singular coincidence, the architects and engineers of the city were in the same year

summoned to consult on the possible means of constructing the cupola. Having spent some months in preparing models, he returned to Rome, whence he was recalled before long, to explain his plans to the Signoria. Brunelleschi advised them to assemble all the architects of Italy to compete for the work, giving them a year in which to prepare their designs ; and he finished his speech in words impressed equally with reverence for the object of the work, and with calm consciousness of his own great genius. "Remembering," he said, "that this is a temple consecrated to God and the Virgin, I confidently trust that, for a work executed to their honour, they will not fail to infuse knowledge where it is now wanting, and will bestow strength, wisdom, and genius on him who shall be the author of such a project ;" adding, that if the work were adjudged to him, his "courage and power would, beyond all doubt, suffice to discover means whereby the work might be effected."

In 1420, a great concourse of artists were assembled in Florence with their designs, Brunelleschi alone refusing to show his model, though fully explaining its principles before the assembled judges. They seem however neither to have understood nor appreciated him, since Vasari says that they called him a fool ; and upon one occasion, after a vehement

speech made by him, caused him to be removed from the meeting. The other artists demanded that Brunelleschi should display his plan, which he persisted in refusing to do, suggesting that the dispute should be settled by everyone trying to balance an egg on a smooth plane of marble; he who could do so, to be chosen to build the cupola. One can hardly understand the ludicrous simplicity of mind which permitted a number of artists gravely assembled to debate on a scientific work, to agree to try their ingenuity on this impossible problem; yet Vasari says that they did so. When Brunelleschi's turn came, he gave the egg a blow on the plane, and so, of course, made it stand. The rest protested against the joke, but Brunelleschi only laughed, and said that when they had seen his model, in like manner would they know how to build the dome. At last, after much weary discussion, the commission was given to Brunelleschi, of whose great architectural genius the Florentine people seem to have been alike unconscious and unworthy; for having grudgingly placed this great work in the hands of the only living man who could have done it, they harassed and hindered him in every way, associating Ghiberti with him in the management of it, apparently for the express purpose of annoying him. Ghiberti himself

seems to have returned Brunelleschi's former generosity to him with nothing but ill-treatment ; and while showing himself incapable of superintending the carrying out of any part of the design, and ignorant of the scientific knowledge requisite to the execution of it, he persisted in trying to rival him, and to preserve a party in his favour in the Signoria. At last, after many efforts to get rid of him, Brunelleschi, in despair, feigned illness and took to his bed, during which time the work, of course, came to a standstill, Ghiberti pretending that he did not like to continue it without his coadjutor. The wardens of the Cathedral therefore visited Brunelleschi, and pressed him to make an effort to return to the works, telling him Ghiberti's words. "But I could go on with it well enough without him," was Brunelleschi's significant answer. After this, Brunelleschi was appointed sole architect ; and knowing that the work could not now be completed in his lifetime, he caused all the marbles and stones requisite to finish it to be brought to the place, and left minute directions in his will concerning the completion of the dome. So, at the age of sixty-nine, in 1446, while still engaged in his mighty work, he died, "mourned," says Vasari, "by the numerous poor artists whom he had helped," and was buried with such honour, as had the Florentines

paid him in life, he might have lived to see the completion of his life's idea.

Masaccio completes the first group of the Renaissance. He was born in 1402, and named Tommaso, or Maso, the termination of the name by which we know him, having been added in derision, by reason of his eccentricity and strange disorderly habits; 'accio' meaning awkward, clumsy, or what the French better express by their word 'gauche.' Like other great men of that century, he was architect, sculptor, and painter, though he is chiefly known in the latter branch of art. He was balloted for, and enrolled in the guild of Florence, at the early age of nineteen. To the teaching of his friend, Brunelleschi, he owed much of that knowledge of perspective which his pictures show; and his study of classical models gave him a power of drawing and foreshortening which made his pictures the wonder of his age. He was invited to Rome by the Cardinal S. Clemente; and in one of the chapels of that church we may see his early work, and observe his delight in the scientific and difficult parts of his subject, and his great advance in technical excellence, beyond the other painters of his age. His frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmine Church, a continuation of those by an artist named Masolino, form a landmark

in the history of painting, and show the advance of the Renaissance in that art, as clearly as Ghiberti's gates in sculpture. Their date is about 1423-1428. The knowledge of human form, and of the principles of perspective and foreshortening displayed in them, is wonderful ; and they became the models of imitation and objects of study, to several generations of artists.

We know little or nothing of Masaccio's short life. He seems to have lived a struggling, uncared-for existence ; his property perpetually in pawn, and his debts always overwhelming him ; which distresses, however, do not seem to have hindered his work, or even to have affected his spirits, so absorbing was his passion for his art. A mystery hangs over his end. He left Florence in 1428, suddenly, for Rome, leaving his frescoes in the Carmine Church unfinished, and his debts unpaid, and was never heard of again. Rumour said that he was poisoned, but we know nothing except that the tax-paper for that or the next year was filled up with the words, '*Dicesi è morto in Roma.*'

So these three great contemporaries, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, and Masaccio, inaugurated the reign of the Renaissance. So realistic art, imperceptibly and gradually, took the place of symbolic religious art.

So had the paralysing influences of a paganism, which was but another name for licentiousness in faith and life, gathered around the degenerate Church and city of S. Peter, and polluted the sources of religious art, which should have looked towards Rome for its highest inspirations. The history of mediæval Christendom was closing in darkness. The spirit of the Reformation was already abroad, pervading the society which it so convulsed to its foundations in the coming century, and forming the foundations of modern history.

They little dreamed—these three great representative minds of the fifteenth century—of the depths of error and falsehood to which they were hastening the art of their age; and while Brunelleschi was dreaming over the Pantheon at Rome, Ghiberti thinking to improve on the immemorial traditions of Christendom, and Masaccio absorbed in foreshortening and perspective, that each was making a fatal choice, which their own and succeeding generations would accept and extend. It was a fatal choice, because it was a practical rejection of the heaven-sent inspirations which taught the rude Lombards to carve their faith and awe in the mystery of the Incarnation, long ago on the portals of S. Zenone, and which descended on the shepherd-lad as he kept

his flock on the hills of Florence, teaching him through all his wonderful life ; and a substitution of that self-taught knowledge which begins in vanity and ends in self-contemplation. It was a choice made long ago in Eden, when the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the evening, and talked with man, and all creation lent its beauty to make sweet music for him ; and he ate of the tree of knowledge, and passed out from its angel-guarded gates for evermore, into the wilderness, where he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. It was verily a passing from the gates of Paradise into the land of the Shadow of Death.

PICTURES OF THE FLORENTINE SCHOOL IN BRITISH GALLERIES.

ORCAGNA.

- National Gallery* Coronation of the Virgin.
Wooton Hall Crucifixion. *Probably by Bernar-
 nardo.*

MASACCIO.

- National Gallery* His own portrait.
Late Lord Northwick Portrait of a man.
Glentyan Nine monks in chiaro-scuro.
Christ Church, Oxford Study of a figure.
British Museum Study of a man's profile..

CHAPTER VII.

THE TWO FLORENTINE MONKS.

			Born.		Died.
Fra Giovanni Angelico	..	..	1387	..	1455
Fra Filippo Lippi	..	..	1412	..	1469
Benozzo Gozzoli	..	..	1424	..	} Circa 1496
Sandro Botticelli	..	..	1447	..	

AMONG the throng of artists who crowded day after day to the Carmine Church, to study the frescoes of Masaccio, came a lad of fifteen or sixteen, wearing the habit of the Carmelite order, and called Filippo Lippi. His father and mother dying when he was very young, Filippo was sent by his guardians to a convent, when eight years old—a convenient and not uncommon method of getting rid of orphaned children, at that period. In the convent school, he showed himself as clever with his hand, as he was dull with his books, which last fact is perhaps no matter for wonder, since he employed the time when he should have been reading, in covering the pages with

caricatures. The Prior, seeing the boy's talent, had him taught drawing ; and in the Brannacci Chapel of the convent church he spent most of his time as he grew up, forming his taste on Masaccio's style with such success, that those who saw his first efforts said that the spirit of Masaccio had descended on him. His first works executed in this church have all disappeared, destroyed by time, or by a fire which did much damage in the Carmine. The Nativity of the Florence Academy, which has on it the marks of true religious feeling and reverence, is one of his few remaining early paintings, done while he was still at the convent.

No records remain of Lippi's life, and although the romantic story of Vasari, familiarised to us through Mr. Browning,* has until lately been accepted, yet that biographer's habitual inaccuracy has caused considerable doubt to rest on a history which has no more certain basis than Florentine tradition. Vasari's assertion, that Lippi escaped from the convent when seventeen years of age, is at any rate improbable ; since there remain documents which show that he was appointed by Cosmo de' Medici to the chaplaincy of the Florentine convent of nuns, in 1452, and in 1457 to the rectorship of a church ; neither of which

* 'Men and Women.' Fra Filippo Lippi.

offices could he have held, unless in full orders. It is observable also, that Lippi never, throughout his life, renounced his title of 'Frate,' and that in a picture of the Coronation of the Virgin, painted by him, and now in the Florence Academy, his own portrait appears, with the dress and tonsure of a Bernadine monk.

It is easier, however, to refuse belief in an established tradition than to disprove its accuracy. Posterity rarely calumniates a man whose character has not already been injured by his own act; and although, in one instance, a writer,* in endeavouring to establish the comparative integrity of Lippi's life, has refused credit to the whole history as recorded by Vasari, it would be hard to believe that his moral character was even up to the standard required of a painter of sacred art in that age. The story of the seduction of Lucrezia Buti is also too circumstantial not to have foundation in fact, and the fame of Filippino Lippi too great, to admit the probability that his parentage was unknown, or the tradition that he was Filippo's son, an invention.

While painting for the nuns of S. Margherita at Prato, where Lippi was much employed on the Cathedral, he saw and became fascinated, according to

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle's 'History of Art,' vol. ii. chap. xiii. p. 324.

Vasari, with a beautiful girl named Lucrezia Buti, a scholar of the convent. He persuaded the nuns to allow him to paint her portrait, and having courted and won her, carried her off, and kept her with him, in spite of all the efforts of her family to recover her, for the rest of her life. Two pictures of Lippi's remain, the Madonnas of which are said to have been portraits of Lucrezia ; one a Nativity, now in the Louvre,* and the other a Madonna, in the Pitti gallery.

Lippi's last days were spent at Spoleto, where he painted in the apse of the Cathedral. He died in 1469.

Fra Filippo may be said to have been the earliest landscape painter of the Florentine school ; he substituted it often as a background for his pictures, instead of the architectural distances which characterise Masaccio's works. There is also a marked advance in technical skill, and study of the human form, from the art of Masaccio to that of Lippi ; and the period of the work of the latter, marks another step in the era of the Renaissance, both in the tendency to sensuousness and in the increase of naturalism. But while Masaccio always painted with earnest and conscientious attention to his subject,

* This picture is, however, thought by Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle not to have been painted by Lippi.

even when carried away by his devotion to the study of form, Lippi took the fatal step of degrading his subject into a vehicle for displaying his knowledge. He was the first artist who attempted to paint texture and imitate material, for this purpose dressing even his angels in the Florentine garb of the period, to the no small detraction from their celestial appearance. His chief merit as an artist lay in his colouring, in which he certainly surpassed Masaccio; but his work was marred, and his sense of beauty blunted, by his lack of spirituality, and by a certain coarseness of thought which tinged all his conceptions. There is both dignity and grace in many of his figures, but no spiritual presences move among them; everything in his pictures is of the earth, earthy. His tendency to vulgarity, induced probably by an undisciplined and immoral life, is clearly shown in his frequent introduction of low characters and scenes into his backgrounds, apparently for the mere pleasure of doing so; and the disgrace has ever been attached to his name of having, first of Christian artists, placed on the throne of the blessed Virgin the face and form of his mistress. The fatal influence which Lippi exercised on Florentine painting, lay in the example which he set of a sensual treatment of subjects in art, whether sacred or secular, and in introducing an

irreverence in the handling of holy things which swiftly ended in the extinction of the school of sacred art in Italy. And this Lippi did deliberately, living amidst the presences of Orcagna's angel hosts, and in daily sight of the Madonnas of Cimabue and Giotto—not, as now, faint memories of departed glory, but glowing with all the life and colour which the masters' hands had left there. Doubtless, in the chequered life of which we know so little, there were excuses for his failures. Mr. Browning, in his vivid sketch, has claimed our sympathies on the side of the young orphaned artist, thrown, with his warm nature and strong passions, into the unnatural restraints of a convent, and coerced into the fatal mistake of accepting a life for which he had no vocation. There may be truth, as well as deep pathos, in the pleading words which he has put in Fra Filippo's mouth :

“ ‘ For me, I think I speak as I was taught ;
I always see the garden, and God there
A-making man's wife ; and, my lesson learned,
The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.’ ”

But, without judging him hardly, we cannot but think that if Fra Filippo could look back through the centuries on the result of his work, it would be a saddening sight for him to see the share which

he, a religious, had taken, in the final desecration of Christian art.

About the same time as Fra Filippo Lippi was living out his restless life, another monk-artist was fulfilling his career in the Dominican convent at Florence. We know little of the early life of Fra Giovanni Angelico, save that it was spent in that same sweet Val d'Arno whose peaceful pasture and flower lands had become the school of so great a race of artists, that, at the age of twenty, he, with his brother, received the Dominican habit at Fiesole, and that they were professed in 1407 ; our artist by the name of the great Apostle whose loving character he strove so earnestly to imitate, and his brother by that of Benedetto. The convent was then unfinished, and the brotherhood too small to admit of the training of novices ; Fra Giovanni was therefore sent to Cortona, where he probably remained for some time, and where his first frescoes, now destroyed, were painted. A quarrel with the Archbishop of Florence on the deposition of Pope Gregory VII., and the election of Alexander V. in his place, obliged the Dominicans to fly from his diocese in 1409, and take refuge at Foligno. When they returned in 1418, it is supposed that Fra Giovanni was with them.

There remain no records of his different journeys,

nor any clue by which a chronological arrangement of his works may be made during the eighteen years he spent at Fiesole, no dates being affixed to his pictures. The celebrated frescoes of S. Mark's are almost the only works of which we know the date and history. Cosmo de' Medici, the great patron of Florentine art, made over to the Dominicans, on their return from exile, an unoccupied convent in Florence, repairing it at his own expense, and munificently rebuilding the church. It was not finished till 1441, but in 1436 the convent was formally taken possession of by the Dominicans under the name of S. Mark's, Eugenius IV. assisting at their installation. In 1438 Fra Giovanni was commissioned to paint the altar-piece of the blessed Virgin enthroned, the centre part of which now hangs in the Academy, much injured. Then he began to fresco the walls and cloisters of the convent, and though many have been destroyed or removed, the greater part of these lovely works still light up the deserted cells, and throw their soft glow over the silent cloisters of that famous home of Florentine art. Here are all the well-known master-pieces made familiar to us by the Arundel Society's publications. In the chapter-house is the 'theological' picture of the Crucifixion, with the fathers of the Church gathered around the Cross. In

the upper corridor, the Coronation of the Virgin, thought to be his first fresco; the Descent into Hades, the Maries at the Tomb, and the Annunciation: and, in the lower corridor, are S. Peter Martyr enjoining silence, finger on lip, with a stern aspect, to those who enter the sacristy; S. Dominic wielding his 'discipline' over his order; and lastly, with a more tender thought, over the hospital for wayfarers, the Lord in a pilgrim's garb, received and welcomed by the Dominican monks. Many of Angelico's works are in the Florence Academy; among them, in the Tuscan Gallery, that Madonna with saints which Professor Ruskin considers his loveliest picture. Very few of his pictures have reached England; a small Madonna with saints and angels, sadly re-touched within the last few years, is in the Oxford Gallery, and a very beautiful *predella* of an altar-piece at Fiesole, representing the Resurrection, in the National Gallery. His beautiful picture of the Last Judgment, executed for the Church of the Angeli, and now in the Florence Academy, shows how deeply he was imbued with the spirit of Orcagna,* whose works he is said to have studied

* There is another Last Judgment by Angelico, in the Corsini Gallery, at Rome, in which he has evidently copied Orcagna's figure of our Lord.

greatly. The Lord is seated in the centre, a cloud of seraphim around, glowing red, to express the fire of their love ; the nine orders of the heavenly hierarchy are ranged around in their ranks, each marked with the traditional symbol. An angel bears the cross in the midst, while the trumpets sound on each side. The blessed Virgin sits on the Lord's right hand, in white, star-spangled robe, lined with green, emblem of that eternal spring of which the Church has worn indeed the symbol on earth, and in anticipation, but which is now hers in truth. She turns towards her Son and Saviour, her arms crossed on her breast, and a look of earnest supplication on her face, as for the trembling world beneath. Behind are the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and saints of the Church ; S. John bringing his lamb, S. Peter his keys, and each one his own recognised symbol. Lines of glory radiate from their place on high, marking it as the region of God's immediate Presence. The lower part of the picture is divided by a long 'campo santo' of open graves, ended by the closed tomb of Christ. On the extreme left are seen the seven circles of hell, with Lucifer consuming the lost, and demons dragging them downwards. This part of the picture, the arrangement of which is borrowed from Orcagna, has been evidently finished by the

gentle-spirited artist as rapidly as possible, and as an unwelcome duty. On the right hand are the elect, gazing towards the divine presence in rapt adoration.

“Multitudes—multitudes—stood up in bliss,
Made equal to the angels, glorious, fair ;
With harps, palms, wedding-garments, kiss of peace,
And crowned and haloed hair.

“As though one pulse stirred all, one rush of blood
Fed all, one breath swept through myriad-voiced,
They struck their harps, cast down their crowns, they stood,
And worshipped and rejoiced.

“Each face looked one way like a moon new-lit,
Each face looked one way towards its Sun of Love ;
Drank love and bathed in love and mirrored it,
And knew no end thereof.

“Glory touched glory on each blessèd head,
Hands locked dear hands never to sunder more :
These were the new-begotten from the dead
Whom the great birthday bore.”*

A pope and emperor lead the procession toward the city into which the kings of the earth shall bring their honour and glory ; then come religious, bishops, and the rest, all in their ranks. But the sweetest feeling and tenderest touches, are where the angel-guardians have come to seek their sacred charges and dear companions in the battle of life, and whom, half

* ‘Goblin Market and other Poems :’ “From House to Home.”
Christina Rossetti.

supporting, half caressing, they now lead on, whispering words of reassuring love. And we follow them to a meadow "made green for wearied eyes," where, crowned with flowers, they join in dance and song, and then pass onwards, two and two, towards the shining walls of the heavenly City, through the gates of which, shut no more at all by day, the golden rays are streaming, and into which our eyes dimly see two blessed ones just passing, lost within the light.

About 1446 Angelico was invited to Rome by Eugenius IV., and there painted the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, destroyed by the vandalism of a later Pope. In the next year Eugenius died, and Angelico entered into an agreement to paint in Orvieto cathedral, where, however, he only remained long enough to paint the three divisions of the roof, which are still to be seen there. He was summoned back to Rome by Nicholas V., and for him painted his last work, the lovely chapel of S. Lorenzo, which, perhaps from its insignificant size, escaped the fate which befel so many of the priceless treasures of mediæval art in Rome, during the age of the Renaissance. Of all his works, this is perhaps the most perfect and complete. It would seem as though, as he neared the entrance to that Paradise which had been the chief object of his earthly meditations, he

gathered his strength for one last effort, his spiritual vision waxing higher and clearer, and his sense of beauty more unearthly, as he laid down his pencil for ever ;

“The sweetest thought the last.”

Angelico might, doubtless, have taken a more prominent place, both in his order and in the outer world, than he did, so great was his fame both as an artist and a saint. He was offered the archbishopric of Florence, but declined it, praying the Pope to appoint Fra Antonio, a Dominican of great holiness, who, being raised to the office, filled it so well, that he was afterwards canonised by Adrian VI. “It was so much safer,” Angelico would say, “to obey than to rule.” “He who practises the art of painting,” he often remarked, “has need of quiet, and should live without cares and anxieties ; he who would do the work of Christ must dwell continually with Him.” It is said of him that he was never known to be angry, or to reprove, save in gentleness and love. He never took pencil in hand without prayer, nor could he paint the Passion of Christ without tears of sorrow. Looking on his work as an inspiration from God, he never altered or improved his designs when once completed, saying that “such was the will of God.” He acquired the name of Angelico, by which

he is chiefly known, from his purity and heavenly-mindedness, and, after his death, the title of Beato was conferred on him by the Church; an honour only slightly inferior to that of canonisation.

Angelico's merits as an artist have been as much overrated by one school of thought, as they have been denied by another, and it may therefore be well to consider briefly the extent and limits of his power, and the value of his influence on art. Doubtless, Angelico looked with distress and perplexity on the resistless sweep of paganism over religion and art, and the renunciation of Christian tradition and teaching. Far removed, in his cloister life, from the region of speculative thought, we can well imagine with what feelings he must have regarded the revolutionary spirit of his age, and how, uncomprehending, and unsympathetic, he withdrew himself altogether from the taint of its presence in art, and dwelt in the atmosphere of those earlier ages of religious mysticism to which he indeed belonged. True son of Giotto, the great founder of the Italian schools, Angelico is unequalled as a master of pure colour, shadowless, glorious. Trained on the borders of that centre of the Umbrian school, Assisi, he might be called its first master, uniting, as it was the special characteristic of that school to do, the spiritualism of

Sienese art, with the colour of the Florentine school. Diverging from the latter in his lack of dramatic power, the force of his pictures lies in their expression and ideal beauty. His power is wholly spiritual, as distinguished from intellectual; the former quality being dependent on intensity of expression, while the latter shows itself chiefly in dramatic action or in the delineation of form, in which Angelico always failed. His highest successes are in the groups of his angel choirs and glorified saints, no two of which are alike in face or form, though each one is perfect in grace and beauty; while his power visibly fails in all attempts to delineate our Lord's human form, the representations of which are always weak and inadequate, and devoid of dignity.* This defect is owing in a great measure, no doubt, to Angelico's neglect of the study of the human body, in which his knowledge was very defective, and his drawing sometimes very bad. He was, in fact, reactionary, in this, as in most other respects, to the spirit of his age, refusing the scientific knowledge which his contemporaries were turning to such questionable account, and basing his work on half-truths, turned into exquisite harmonies. Angelico was also partly by

* The picture in the National Gallery is a notable example of this.

reason of his passionless nature, partly from his seclusion from great temptations, incapable of expressing evil or sin, or any human passion whatever; so that there is a feebleness about all his efforts to represent historical facts, which negatives his moral power, and detracts from his value as a teacher. Such painting as his, can never ordinarily teach or help any but child-like, simple minds. He lived in an ideal world, where Christ and His saints dwelt continually and angels passed to and fro; where the sun always shone, and the flowers blossomed. His work belongs indeed to a high order of art, inasmuch as he habitually put his imagination * to its highest use, in realising those things which shall endure when the facts of this fleeting world have passed away. It would be difficult, one would think, to live with a picture of Angelico's before one's eyes, without being inspired to see sometimes the Presences which compass us about; and we must not undervalue his painting, or forget its devotional value, so long as in this land of shadows we need helps to raise our clouded imaginations. Angelico's work is marked with the impress of noble art, because, painting in honesty and simplicity what to him were the truest of

* See 'Modern Painters,' vol. iii. part iv. ch. iv. §§ 5, 6.

all facts, he did probably the best thing which he was capable of doing, in the most earnest, thorough, and loving way he knew how.* In so doing, it was given him to paint the forms of the spiritual Presences around us, as none other ever painted them, and to tell us sweet thoughts such as no other painter has ever dreamed, of that world where the sun sets not and the flowers are unfading, and the angels are waiting for us. Angelico's technical merits have already been mentioned ;—the wonderful loveliness of his colour, and his exquisite perception of ideal beauty. Dwelling in the atmosphere of Heaven, he wants to express the rainbow hues of perpetual spring and unclouded skies. Through the transparent atmosphere his angels move, their star-spangled garments melting into its softness ; and the light which shoots from the Throne falls on them in rose-colour and amber, touching their sweet faces, as it passes, with clearest pink, and playing amidst the glory of their golden hair, which no wind has ever ruffled out of its waving rest. Nor does Angelico ever fail, amidst the gem-like glory of his colour and the finish of his touch, to make us look first and above all at his faces—had he done so, he would have been

* Ibid. part iv. chap. vi. p. 79. On Purist Idealism.

stamped for ever as second instead of first among the ranks of the great painters. In all the matchless finish of his work, there is no choice but to look at his faces first.* His angels, floating on blue clouds, or standing in choirs, need no burnished gold or waving flame, or rainbow-dipped wings, to tell us that they have come fresh from their place on the sea of glass, and caught the reflection of the Vision of Beauty ; his Madonna needs no starry robe or shining crown to mark her as Queen in the hierarchy of redeemed spirits, for the light of Heaven is on her brow, and the halo around it can add no radiance to its calm loveliness.

We have dwelt thus long on the features of the ideal school of painting, of which Angelico was the greatest master, because, true and beautiful as the principles were in the age and under the conditions in which he worked, they have been the ruin of modern religious art, so that weakness has become associated with purity, and incapacity with devotion. Is it not right, then, it may be asked, that art should avoid representations of evil, and dwell on noble and beautiful subjects ? And the answer is, Assuredly, if the avoidance does not degenerate into

* See 'Mornings in Florence,' No. vii. ; not yet published.

cowardice, and if the choice be made not in weakness but in strength. But the lessons of life are not learned or taught by shrinking from the contamination, or ignoring the presence of evil, nor have the great teachers of mankind ever done their work thus, for human nature. Orcagna tells us, with all the force of his mighty mind, what he thinks of Sin, Death, and Judgment. There is no doubt whatever in his mind, that the first will end in sorrow, and the last come as a thief in the night, to a careless world. He sees, in his mind's eye, the Lord coming in the clouds of Heaven, and hears the Archangel's trump, and puts his soul with the figure of the cowering guardian-angel, trembling and sorrow-stricken for the multitudes of lost souls ; and he has to try and make a froward generation understand, as they pass, how terrible are Death, Judgment, and Hell. And if they do pass unmoved, as one must think few could do, he knows that he has delivered his own soul, and that one thing more will be against them, in the Day when the books are opened. No amount of spiritualised half-truths and one-sided facts, could have pierced the consciences, or awed the souls of men, as the stern notes of Orcagna's teaching, in that day of the decline of Florence. Evil being an inevitable condition of human things, is not to be

combated by being ignored, or conquered by being fled from. As there is in life no true rest from temptation but what is purchased, no victory over evil but what is won, so there can be no true and helpful art which deliberately avoids all representation of evil from morbid dislike to contemplate it, or from feeble fear of its contamination. And in proportion as it falls into this error, will art lose its power to attract, and its strength to help, the perplexed, the sorrowful, and the erring.

Two antagonistic schools of art were thus founded in Florence in the fifteenth century: out of one, sensuous in its moral tendency, pagan in intellectual sympathies, growing Renaissance art; and out of the spirituality and quiet imagination of the other, the Umbrian school. Sandro Botticelli was the chief exponent of the one, Benozzo Gozzoli of the other phase of thought; the former a pupil of Fra Filippo Lippi, the latter the favourite disciple of Fra Angelico. After following Fra Angelico to Rome, and assisting him in his work at Orvieto, Gozzoli seems to have begun his separate career as a master. He went into Umbria at once (1449), without, like most native artists, first trying his fortune in Florence—attracted thither, perhaps, by his connection with the Dominican order, who had a house at Foligno,

near which he settled. His early style closely resembles that of his master, so much so that an altar-piece by him, in the Lateran Museum, has sometimes been a subject of dispute, and attributed to Angelico. His work at Montefalco, where he filled the choir of the Franciscan church with frescoes, is still to be seen. Shortly after Fra Angelico's death he returned to Florence, thinking perhaps to take his place as Angelico's pupil and successor; here, however, he only obtained one commission—the chapel of the Riccardi palace. A change passed over his style at this period, and he seems to have caught somewhat of the influences which pervaded Florentine art; adopting more naturalism of treatment, weaving more fanciful thoughts into his pictures, and leaving that excessive ideality which he had learned in Angelico's school. In thus following his natural tendencies, he developed a style peculiarly his own, in its freshness and sweetness, and imparted an interest to his pictures beyond what they could ever have excited, had he remained cramped within the rules of Angelico's art. The Journey of the Magi is the subject of the Riccardi chapel, and it was one which gave scope to Gozzoli's new tastes, and full opportunity for displaying the bright dresses, fantastic groups, and beautiful distances, which are so characteristic of his

later work. After travelling about, and doing much other work, he received, in 1469, the commission for his great work at Pisa, by which he is chiefly known. This immense work, with which he covered an entire wall of the Campo Santo, consists of twenty-one frescoes, subjects from the Old and New Testaments, and represented the principal work of sixteen years. The spirit of mediæval art could scarcely have died away in aught more sweet and pure in thought and feeling than this. There is such a happy combination of the ideal and the realistic, of fanciful imagination and quiet peace, as makes this work matchless in art. Groups of noble men, and beautiful women, and graceful children, pass among bright trees and flowers and twining shrubs, amidst which the birds are ever singing, and the sun shining ; and sweet gardens and undulating landscape, interspersed with classic temples and Gothic towers, fill the distances.*

Among the greatest of the masters of Christian art in the age of its decline was Alessandro Filipepi, known as Sandro Botticelli,† of whom Professor Ruskin has said, that he united in an unapproachable

* One of Gozzoli's rare panel pictures is that of the National Gallery. It was painted in 1461.

† The name of the goldsmith to whom he was apprenticed.

degree and quality, spiritual power with physical knowledge and technical skill. His early works, nevertheless, have a tendency to coarseness of treatment, the result perhaps of the influence of Filippo Lippi, on whose manner Botticelli formed his style.

It was while Botticelli was in his highest prime (1481-1484) that he was summoned by Sixtus IV. to superintend the works of the Sistine Chapel, as the best painter of sacred art in Italy. He and Perugino worked together as friends in the distribution of the work; and it would seem an evidence of Botticelli's generosity, and their mutual friendliness, that the share given to Perugino was the most important part of the chapel, the eastern end. Of all the frescoes which Botticelli himself painted there, that of the *Life of Moses** is perhaps the most beautiful in tenderness of feeling and sweetness of quiet sentiment. Botticelli's work is an advance on the realism of Lippi. In his type of angels, he forsook entirely the conventional idealism of earlier religious art, introducing the waving garments and flowing hair—suggesting atmosphere, and swift movement—which we see in Perugino's pictures, and which Raffaele, in his turn, so exaggerated.

* Just published by the Arundel Society.

His Madonnas, too, are of a fresh type, suggesting more of the human mother than any previous to his time. But they are very lovely in their sweet, sad thoughtfulness, far removed from the insipid sentimentality of Raffaello's Madonnas, which became the type of the next generation. A recent writer of some charming studies on the Renaissance* has seen only in Botticelli's Madonnas a tone of thought akin to paganism; the wistful thoughtfulness he has interpreted into listlessness, the sadness into an oppressed sense of the "intolerable honour" which has made all generations call her blessed. Unlike, indeed, the radiant, glorified Madonna of an earlier age, his Virgin Mother seems less conscious of the victory won through her, than of the rejection of the blessing she brings, by those who need it most. But we venture to think that Sandro Botticelli would have shrunk, dismayed, from an interpretation suggesting such thoughts as the words we have quoted. Botticelli's fanciful imagination and love of mysticism, visible in his numerous mythological pictures, found vent also in study of Dante, on whose work he not only began a commentary, but for a printed edition of which, he executed a series of illustrations. It was

* Mr. W. H. Pater, 'Studies in the History of the Renaissance.'

published in 1488, and was one of the first books ornamented with copper engravings. He also illustrated with his own hand a manuscript of the Divine Comedy, now in the possession of the Duke of Hamilton. In his later years, Botticelli came under the influence of Savonarola, and gave up painting altogether. That great Reformer's denunciations of pagan art probably extended to the painting even of such harmless mythological pictures as Botticelli's, and, indeed, to all representations of the nude figure, whether in painting or sculpture ; and the effect of his preaching on Botticelli's mind would seem to have been deep and lasting. His life ended in obscurity and poverty, and but for the generosity of Lorenzo de' Medici, he would have been in absolute want. With him died away the first phase of Renaissance art, the singular charm of which consisted in its fresh simplicity of unaffected naturalism. In the next generation, Italian art became wholly pagan in thought and sympathies ; no longer playing with the gracefulness and pure beauty of classical art, but teaching its effete beliefs, and expressing its sensualities. How the tide of paganism was stemmed for a brief while, in Florence, and a religious reaction stimulated by the influence of one man, we may try to show in another chapter.

PICTURES BY FLORENTINE ARTISTS IN
BRITISH GALLERIES.

FRA ANGELICO.

- National Gallery* 1. Predella : Christ amidst the Blessed. 2. Adoration of Magi.
Lord Ward 1. Last Judgment. 2. Virgin and Child enthroned.
Late Lord Northwick A Miracle.
Mr. Maitland Entombment of the Virgin.
Oxford Gallery Virgin and Child enthroned.

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI.

- National Gallery* 1. Vision of S. Bernard. 2. Virgin and Child enthroned. 3. Virgin, Child, and an Angel. 4. Annunciation. 5. Seven Saints.
Windsor Castle Drawing of a Virgin, Child, and an Angel.
Liverpool Institute 1. Martyrdom of S. Sebastian. 2. The Temptation of S. Anthony. *Called Masaccio.*
Oxford Gallery Procession of Virgins to the Temple of Veii.
Lord Ward Virgin and Child.
Ince Hall Virgin and Child.
Mr. Maitland 1. Adoration of the Magi. 2. Predella : SS. Peter and John healing the lame man.
Corsham Court 1. Annunciation. 2. An Angel. 3. S. Mary Magdalene.
Mr. Barker 1. Six Saints enthroned. 2. Adoration of the Magi.
Hamilton Palace Adoration of the Magi.

BENOZZO GOZZOLI.

- National Gallery* 1. Virgin enthroned. 2. Rape of Helen.
- Lord Ward* Virgin and Child. *Called Ghirlandajo.*
- Mr. Barker* Adoration of the Magi.
- Dudley House* Virgin and Child.
- Mr. Brett* Virgin and Child.
- Ketteringham Hall* Jupiter and Calisto.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI.

- National Gallery* 1. Virgin, Child, S. John Baptist and Angels. 2. Virgin, Child, S. John Baptist, and an Angel. 3. Virgin and Child. 4. Mars and Venus. 5. Venus and Cupids.
- Lord Ward* Holy Family.
- Late Lord Northwick* Virgin and Child.
- Hamilton Palace* Coronation of the Virgin.
- Mr. Maitland* 1. Virgin, Child, and S. John. 2. Nativity.
- Mr. Barker* 1. Virgin, Child, and S. John. 2. Mythological picture.
- Wooton Hall* 1 and 2. Two Madonnas. 3. Venus.
- Dudley House* Two Nativities.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEUTONIC SCHOOLS.—I.

		Born.		Died.
Hubert Van Eyck	.. .. .	Circa 1336	..	1426
John Van Eyck	.. ..	Circa 1360	..	1440
Roger Van der Weyden	.. ..	.. 1400	..	1464
Hans Memling	.. ..	.. —	Circa	1495

IN Northern as in Southern Europe, sculpture passed from the rude Scandinavian grotesque, through gradual stages of development, till, gradually refined and civilised by the mingled influences of Lombard and Byzantine, it was, after many centuries, perfected into the noble Gothic of Chartres, Rouen, and Cologne.

The connection of the German with the Byzantine court by the marriage of Otho II. (972–983) with a Greek princess, influenced the art of Germany extensively, as we may judge from the illuminated manuscripts of the period, which are the only kind of paintings existing in sufficient numbers to enable

us to follow the course of German art in the early centuries. The cathedral of Bamberg was rich in gifts of this kind, many of them offered by the Emperor Henry II. (1002-1024). The manuscripts of the eleventh century show mostly, increase of technical skill, and feeling for colour, combined with degeneracy of design and treatment, marking the paralysing influence of the Byzantine decline. But there also exist manuscripts of this age which prove the existence of progressive life in the national art of Germany ; the chief characteristics of which are the architectural nature of the ornament, the statuesque stiffness of figures and drapery, and the peculiar projection of surface, and treatment of light and shade, which suggest habitual drawing from the round.* This is accounted for by the supposition that the class of artists who produced these paintings, were those employed in the tinted sculpture for which some districts of Germany were noted, and which, indeed, was common throughout the Netherlands. In this class of painting lay the hope of German art ; for while constant study of sculpture prevented the artists from falling into the fatal mannerisms of the Byzantine school, it also trained them in the best

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *Early Flemish Painters*, chap. i. p. 3. A Bodleian MS. No. 313, Douce, is an example of this.

traditions of that school which the Lombards founded first in Italy, and which spread from thence all over Europe, culminating in the matchless sculpture of France. The Northern spirit of mysticism is strongly marked in this school of miniature painting, and allegory and symbols abound in all its manuscripts. One very curious representation of the Crucifixion exists in a Gospel manuscript of the Munich Gallery. The Lord is nailed to the Cross, supported by a foot-board, vested in crimson robe and priestly stole, and with crowned head. At each side of the Cross stand Life and Death; the former crowned and clothed in rich robes, the latter with matted hair and wounded neck, and broken scythe and lance. A dragon rises from the foot of the Cross. Smaller figures of the sun and moon, and the Old and New Covenants, are on either side; the latter with the standard of victory and the sacramental chalice; the former holding the scroll of the Law and sacrificial knife. Below, is the resurrection of the dead on one side, and the rent vail of the Temple on the other.

It was at Cologne that art found its first home in the North; and there that, in the constant intercourse with Italy, it was peculiarly open to the influences of Southern art. Here the life of the Lombard spirit

first leavened sculpture ; and here, in course of time, Gothic architecture reached its highest perfection. The efforts of Charlemagne centred in Cologne, and though we know little of the history of this once famous city, and the annals of its school and its artists are lost to us, yet it forms an important link in the history of painting, and we see clearly the results of its influence on Germanic art. It is certain that painting was cultivated very early by the Goths, since we know that a series of historical paintings was executed for Queen Theodolinda in her palace at Monza, representing the heroes of the Lombard race. This was as early as the close of the sixth century, and the school from whence these painters issued, must therefore have been a branch of the ancient Roman art, which still lingered on in the Western Empire. The most celebrated of the ancient German paintings were those executed for Charlemagne in the church and palace built by him at Ingelheim, of which descriptions have come down to us from a contemporary chronicler. On the walls of the church were painted two complete series of the histories of the Old and New Testaments ; from the Creation to the building of the Temple on the one side, from the Annunciation to the Resurrection on the other. Those in the palace were an epitome of

the history of the world, commencing with the wars of Cyrus, through the founding of Rome, and the exploits of Hannibal and Alexander the Great, to the more modern history which occupied the opposite wall, of the foundation of the Eastern Empire, the history of Theodosius, Charles Martel, and Pepin, and the conquest of the Saxons by Charlemagne himself. When we consider the grandeur of this undertaking, and the age and conditions in which it was accomplished, we cannot but admire and wonder at the energy and genius of the single mind which could thus lay the foundations of a national school by uniting, like his predecessor Theodoric, the qualities of a conqueror and a civiliser ; inspiring with his own great deeds the art which he fostered.

Metal-work was also advanced in Germany from an early period, as is proved by the admiration testified by the Greek monk Theophilus—made famous by his treatise on art—for the gold and bronze work of the Germans. A splendid specimen is in the Hôtel de Cluny, Paris,—the ancient eleventh-century altar of Basle Cathedral, worked in embossed gold. Of the same period are the brass column and doors of Hildesheim ; among the many gifts to the church, of that indefatigable art-patron Bishop Bernward. In the latter part of the twelfth

century, Northern sculpture began to throw off the trammels of conventional representation; and in Chartres Cathedral may be seen—earliest perhaps of all—the Teutonic type of countenance, and, with its individuality, the dawn of a new life. We may recognise the distinctive Northern type, in that peculiar droop of head and curve of body which has always been the mark of the gentle blood of the Northern races; which gave rise to the proverb, “The nobler the heart the suppler the neck;”^{*} and which is indicative of that spirit of lofty courtesy which made our ancestors so famous in the annals of chivalry, so renowned in legends of love and war. This same Cathedral of Chartres was saved from the revolutionary mob by the adroitness of the mayor, who persuaded the people to dedicate it to the goddess of reason, and so saved the unique and beautiful building. So the symbolic sculptures, and the picture of the Judgment Day, over the entrance, remain un-mutilated; and the stiff, quaint figures of the Prophets and the Elders still stand untouched, looking down, as they have done for eight hundred years, on the fretful multitudes who pass beneath; yet preaching patiently, in their quiet imagery, of death, and after

^{*} Lord Lindsay, vol. iii. letter viii. note to p. 250.

that the judgment. Nor is Chartres the only place in which we may study, with deep interest, the rise of Gothic sculpture. The façade of S. Denis, with the Last Judgment over the porch ; Le Mans Cathedral ; and, finer than either, being somewhat later in date, the south side of Bourges Cathedral, and the south façade of Notre Dame. Belonging to another stage of development—the middle of the thirteenth century—are the beautiful façade of Amiens, the transepts of Chartres, the west portal of Rouen, and the matchless sculpture of Rheims Cathedrals. The monuments of S. Denis—placed there by Louis IX. to commemorate his ancestors—mark the culminating point of the lovely Northern Gothic. We have indeed named no specimens of German work, because such works of early mediæval date are few and far between, and because the sculpture of the Northern countries must be studied together, in order to form a connected idea of its productions. The existing monuments of Germany are rather in those splendid town-halls of a later date with which their cities abound, than in such isolated specimens of earlier work as Bamberg and Freiburg Cathedrals.

There seems to have been a decided improvement in German painting, as in sculpture, in the thirteenth century. The influence of Niccolo Pisano's school

was pervading Europe ; and Germany, though slow to adopt new methods, and wanting in native genius, caught the inspiration. We perceive signs of organised schools of art in Germany as early as the middle of the fourteenth century ; in 1338 the Guild of S. Luke at Ghent was founded, and that of Bruges about the same time. They were governed by a dean and sub-dean ; the price and quality of materials were regulated strictly ; and fines exacted for bad colours and knotted panels. The school of Cologne had by this time become known as the principal school of Germany ; and through the mists of time, two names have come down to us—those of Meister Wilhelm and Meister Stephan—recorded only however in the city archives, and in the quaint notice of a contemporary chronicler, who tells us that Meister Wilhelm was “the best painter in all German lands, and that he painted men of all sorts as if they were alive.”* Several curious old paintings are attributed to these two artists. To Wilhelm, one of the Crucifixion, on a monument in S. Castor at Coblenz, a triptych, representing twenty-four scenes from the life of our Lord, in a chapel of Cologne Cathedral, a Madonna in the Museum, another in the Seminary, and some

* ‘Handbook of the German, Flemish, and Dutch Schools,’ translated from Kügler, book ii. p. 42.

remains of wall-painting in the Rathhaus. To Wilhelm's successor and pupil, Stephan, are attributed a beautiful altar-piece of the Adoration of the Kings, in Cologne Cathedral, and a larger altar picture of the Last Judgment, now divided, of which the middle is in Cologne Museum. The strong tendency to materialism, which is so remarkable in German art, shows itself even at this early period, in the terrible realisation of the terrors of hell ; and the equally strong characteristic of minute finish, is visible in the painting of the grass and flowers and the delicacy of the angels' wings.

This early school of Germany has now passed into oblivion, its very existence being known by few ; and while the names of the old Italian painters are familiar to us as household words, and their memories sacred through all ages and countries, these unknown founders of our own Teutonic schools have passed, unthanked and unremembered, into almost nameless graves. To their honour, be it mentioned, that two brothers, the Messieurs Boisserée, at the time of the French Revolution, expended their money and time in saving the remains of the ancient German schools from the sacrilege of the mob ; and the result was the collection of valuable pictures now in the galleries of Munich and Schleissheim.

In the middle of the fourteenth century, Louis de Male, the last of the ancient dynasty, was Count of Flanders. He first, it would appear, instituted the office of an official painter to the court, and the name of Jean van der Asselt is recorded as having filled the place in his reign. By him, in all probability, were executed those full-length statuesque figures which Louis caused to be painted, of the representatives of his royal line, on the walls of Notre Dame of Courtrai, built by him, about 1370, as a burial-place for his race. There they still stand, faded, injured, and half obliterated, but recognisable as Counts and Countesses of Flanders, by the escutcheons at their feet. There are Philip of Alsace, Baldwin of Hainault, Margaret of Alsace, Baldwin IX., Ferdinand of Portugal, Joan of Constantinople, Gui de Dampierre, Robert of Bethune, with other later portraits of the French dukes of Burgundy.

At that period, and especially perhaps under Louis, Flanders had risen to great commercial importance; and its large towns were year by year, as their foreign trade increased, growing in wealth, power, and importance. The position which they occupied was, however, a very different one to that of the principal Italian cities, and one involving conditions far less favourable to the advancement of art. The cities

of Italy were in fact small states, living independently, with their own aristocracy, government, and civil and military organisations. Their laws, whether relating to commerce, morals, or arts and trades, were made by themselves for themselves, and with the single view of ensuring the prosperity of the city. Art, thus fostered, grew and flourished; and the world has never seen, throughout the Christian era, such a perfect ideal of vigorous national life as in such towns as Florence in the thirteenth century. The prosperity of the Flemish towns, on the other hand, was continually hindered and impaired by the feudal rights of the Counts of Flanders, who were always trying to get the reins of government into their own hands, and claim a share of the rapidly increasing wealth of the communes; the burghers, on their side, being equally anxious to preserve their independence. The Flemish manufacturers practically commanded the ports, and all the duties on foreign merchandise were monopolised by them, which was a constant source of contention between them and the counts. Thus the citizens of Flanders were absorbed, generation after generation, in the one idea of maintaining their privileges by force or guile against the demands of their feudal lords, and of increasing their already immense wealth by every

means in their power ; even their art being chiefly employed, until the end of the fourteenth century, in tapestries and magnificent woven stuffs, which brought in great stores of money. They were essentially a money-making race, and the qualities which these conditions developed were not favourable to the growth of a noble school of art. The magnificent monuments of their grandeur, which the Flemish towns have left, were indeed most closely connected with their mercantile prosperity ; and many of them were built by foreign trades, as in the instance of Bruges, which is said to have had sixteen foreign trading companies, each of whom possessed a palace in the city. It was a part of the charter of a Flemish town that it should have a great bell, by which to assemble the citizens for municipal purposes. The bell necessitated the 'beffroi,' or belfry ; and this, as the symbol of their independence, was usually made conspicuous in its importance. As time went on, and the trades increased, halls were built for the transaction of business, sometimes by the side of the belfry, sometimes incorporated into one building with it ; and thus arose those splendid town-halls, for which Flanders and Belgium are so celebrated.*

* 'Flemish Painters,' chap. xiv. p. 342.

In the valley of the Meuse or Maese, where the river runs by the pleasant gardens of Liége and the picturesque rocky country of Namur, was the village of Mæseyck, the birth-place of the two great religious painters of Germany, Hubert and John Van Eyck. With them a new era opened on German art, and, marked by few symptoms of transition, the old types passed away for ever ; exquisitely finished landscape appears in pictures, and realistic representation is once for all accepted as the principle of painting. Hubert was born about 1336 ; John was his junior by twenty or thirty years, and was his brother's pupil. With the name of the Van Eycks is always associated the so-called discovery of oil painting. Oils had, however, without doubt been used both in Germany and Italy before this time, though in what manner we know not ; and the method of painting which the Van Eycks discovered, was probably one which enabled them to dry their pictures without exposure to the sun, which must have injured their brilliancy ; and with perfect security from the damp of the climate. The story runs, that John, having exposed a picture in the strong sun, as usual, for drying, the heat cracked the wood, and spoiled his work ; and that, upon this failure, he set to work to make chemical experiments ; and after many trials,

found that linseed and other oils mixed with certain drugs and boiled, dried quickly without exposure to the sun. With some such mixture as this he probably ground his colours, and possibly varnished his pictures, and thus succeeded in attaining a brilliancy and transparency which had never been reached by former processes. Whatever the discovery was, it is certain that it was thought a most important one by the Italian artists. It is related,* that a picture by one of the Van Eycks being sent to Alphonso of Naples, "the artists flocked together, every one desirous of seeing this marvellous work ; and though the Italians looked at it very sharply, and tried it with the utmost attention, even putting their noses to it, and clearly perceiving the strong smell which it had from the admixture of the colours with oils, nevertheless it remained a secret to them." It was thus evidently an important improvement for the painting of easel pictures ; and the fashion which this kind of painting thenceforth became in Italy, to the exclusion of fresco and tempera, explains the contemptuous speech of Michael Angelo's, that fresco-painting was the work for men, but that oil-painting was only fit for women.

* James's 'Flemish Schools,' p. 87.

It is thought that the Van Eycks fled from their native place during the wars and feuds which distracted the country at that time, and took refuge at Ghent. Their names do not appear in the records of the guild of that city, till the death of Michelle, wife of Philip the Good of Burgundy, when—in reverence for her memory, it is said—the freedom of the guild was given to the two brothers, whom she had patronised. In 1423, John attached himself to the court of John of Bavaria, who, after making himself Count of Holland, settled at the Hague, where he kept a magnificent court, among whom were numerous artists. Here it is probable that he painted the now destroyed work of the palace of the Hague. In 1425, after leaving the service of the Count of Holland, he was made official painter to Philip of Burgundy.

Up to this time we have no knowledge of the works of the Van Eycks beyond the city records and archives. Their improvement in the method of oil painting probably gave the first great impetus to Flemish art; and the admiration which their works excited in Italy, the facilities which the size gave for carrying them about, with other causes, combined to increase the demand for easel pictures to an immense extent. The wealthy considered their

oratories or private chapels incomplete without some such triptych, panel, or picture, as was now easily procurable in Flanders ; and it was a common thing for magistrates to condemn an offender to pay the cost of some such offering, to a church. Of course, when the Reformation came, these portable works of art were involved, like the illuminated MSS., in a destruction more wholesale and fatal than befell fresco painting ; and as these small works formed the staple of German art, we are unable to trace the history of painting here, as in Italy.

In 1432, the Vyts Chapel, celebrated as the receptacle of the great picture of the Adoration of the Lamb, was consecrated. Judicus Vyts, a patrician of Ghent, built the chapel, and gave the commission of the altar-piece to Hubert Van Eyck, who designed the whole, and executed a few of the figures of the picture. There were originally twelve compartments, divided into an upper and lower row ; three single figures of larger size forming the centre of the top, and the large scene of the Adoration of the Lamb occupying the lower part ; four wings on each side, painted inside and outside, completed it. It was always closed except on festivals ; and in this position, showed the Annunciation, with single figures of saints on each side, and the portraits of the donor

and his wife kneeling. Inside, the centre and highest panel contained the figure of God the Father, the inscription of the Triune God around His head, represented in the fullness of manhood, as always in German art, and crowned with the triple tiara. He is seated on a black damask throne, embroidered with gold, vested in a crimson mantle embroidered with pearls and amethysts, and holding in His left hand a sceptre—His right held out in blessing. On the ground at His feet is a jewelled crown, perhaps symbolising His dominion over all the earth; a hanging of green tapestry behind, worked into golden pelicans, the symbol of redemption. On the right-hand panel is the blessed Virgin, with blue robe, and the long fair hair invariable in German art, the Teutonic symbol of virginity; crowned with a diadem, from which lilies blossom. On the left panel is S. John Baptist. The four farthest compartments were filled—the one with a group of singing angels, the other with S. Cecilia playing, and beyond, Adam and Eve. The central group of the Adoration, the only part now remaining in Ghent Cathedral, occupies, as we have said, the lower part; the side compartments filled by the hermits, pilgrims, soldiers, and righteous judges of the earth, all journeying, some on horseback, some on foot, towards the New

Jerusalem, and among whom tradition points out the portraits of the two brothers. The general design and arrangement are, without doubt, Hubert's, as also are probably the single central figures of the top; differing wholly, as they do, in their treatment, from John's work, which is always sharp, precise, and lacking in the softness of Hubert's painting. In a green meadow, surrounded with sweet landscape, hills, and trees—such as carry us back to the Rhineland scenery of the Van Eycks' early life—the scene of the Adoration is laid. A Flemish town in the background represents the New Jerusalem. An altar, covered with crimson damask and white cloth, stands in the midst, the Lamb on it, with blood flowing from His side into a crystal chalice. Two angels in front swing their censers at His feet, while others adore around, and the Dove descends from the Father on Him. A fountain in front falls into an octagonal basin, from which flow out again the streams which make glad the City of God. The saints of the old dispensation, the apostles, doctors, popes, founders of religious orders, kings, and princes, are all in their ranks. Lilies, roses, bright grass, and trees, fill the foreground, every leaf and flower painted with exquisite tenderness, as in a miniature.

There, in the region of bliss, where the saint and the painter
together
Caught, for one brief sweet space, into Paradise, saw and
depicted
Him, the Immaculate Lamb, and the five wounds flowing of
mercy,
Him, that is set in the midst, true Tree of Life in the garden :
There are the cohorts of saints, not confusedly mingled
together,
Keeping their ranks distinct, as they loved and they conquered
in this world.
Priests that were pure in the spirit, awaiting the Shepherd of
shepherds,
Meekly outfacing the proud, and as meekly absolving the
sinner,
Bishops who, bearing their cross, though concealed, in staff
or in crozier,
Spake God's Word, for they were not ashamed, in the great
congregation.
Kings of the earth stand together, whose sceptres were sceptres
of meekness ;
Judges of right, who have long since found the tribunal of
mercy ;
Pilgrims who, strong in faith, looking up from Salem to Salem,
Strained to the Lord's own shrine ; and dwellers in caverns
and deserts.
Warriors of truth there also, who, toiling in battles of justice,
Tore from the hand of the Church the glorious guerdon of
Martyr ;
Widows, who yielding them up to Him that was widowed of
glory,
Joyed in His comfort below, as now they reign in His Kingdom.
—Ah, but look on ! Who are these, that next the unclosable
portals,
Nearest the domes and tourelles, where sapphire is mingled
with jasper,
Gather in one, truer lilies themselves, in the midst of the lilies ?

There and beyond such a rustling of boughs, as Paradise-
breezes
Draw with a kiss from the foliage of youth—there, bulwark
on bulwark,
Rises the City that hath the foundations ; whose Builder and
Maker,
Maker before all worlds—is for ever its King and its glory,
Light everlasting and pure, and the days of its mourning are
ended ;
Ended, how should they not be ? in the great Beatifical
Vision.”*

In 1426 Hubert died, leaving his lovely conception to be worked out by his brother. They buried him in the vault of the Vyts family, in token of reverence for his memory ; and he was probably its first occupant. “It was in the year of our Lord,” says his epitaph, putting the words in his mouth, “one thousand four hundred and twenty-six, on the eighteenth day of September, that I rendered up my soul to God in suffering. Pray God for me, ye who love art, that I may attain to His sight. Flee sin, turn to the best objects, for you must follow me at last.”

Hubert Van Eyck stands on the transition ground between the ancient Byzantine-Germanic school and the modern realistic art of John and his successors. His work, such as we know of it, unites the dignity

* Dr. Neale's ‘Sequences and Hymns.’ The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

of the one school with much of the knowledge and skill of the other. His name has been eclipsed by that of his brother, whose exquisite delicacy of touch, and perception of colour and atmosphere, has gained him a reputation far beyond that of Hubert, notwithstanding that the latter was the master mind. John's work reaches its highest perfection in the picture of the Vyts Chapel, worked out under his brother's inspiration; and his power of realisation is kept in check and subordinated to the idea of the work, in a degree we never see in his later paintings. As time went on, he sacrificed force, more and more, to refinement, and breadth of treatment to minuteness of detail, with lessening power to discern the elements of true beauty. John Van Eyck died at Bruges, in July 1440, and was buried in the Church of S. Donatian; and every July for three hundred years uninterruptedly, masses were said for the repose of his soul, till the sacrilegious hands of the Revolutionists laid hold on the bequest which secured them.

Roger Van der Weyden, born at Tournai in 1400, was meantime founding a separate school in the west of Flanders. The tinted sculpture for which this district was celebrated, had, it is thought, a marked influence on the tone and colour of the school. Van

der Weyden lived at Bruges from 1440 to 1450. He was the representative painter of his age, far more than was John Van Eyck, and consequently gained a wider popularity. In his paintings we see, no longer disguised, that tendency to materialism, always strong in the German mind, which was now, in its increasing strength, the near harbinger of the Protestant Revolution; and that final rejection of the symbolism of Christian art, which silenced the voice of inspiration for evermore. A Puritanical reaction—the foretaste of the Reformation—was even then going on in Bruges, the result of which may be conjectured from a contract existing, for a picture of a “dead Christ,” in which it is expressly ordered that the form of our Lord shall be painted in all respects “like a dead man.” A picture of this very subject, by Van der Weyden, in the Berlin Museum, shows clearer than any words can do, the depths of irreverence to which realistic painting can fall, and the loss of all sense of the Divinity of our Lord which it may involve.

In 1449, Van der Weyden started for Italy, spending some time at Ferrara and Rome, and, we can hardly doubt, at Florence also. He passed through the influences of Italy untouched, as it would seem, by the mighty works of Giotto and Orcagna, and

unsoftened by the living influence of Angelico; content with the dim melancholy twilight which lights his sunless pictures, and unroused from the morbid sadness which had grown around his soul; fain to dwell ever on Death rather than Life. And over his pictures there hangs the shadow of that Death which he invoked.

One more painter claims our special notice before we close this brief sketch of the early German school of painting—Hans Memling. He was the pupil of Van der Weyden, but belongs more truly to the school of Van Eyck, of which he was the last and best representative. He is supposed to have worked much at miniature painting in his early life, and to have been chosen to complete the celebrated Grimani Breviary, now preserved by the Venetians, to whom it was bequeathed, in the library of S. Mark's. A touching story, of doubtful authenticity, connects his memory, inseparably, with the Hospital of S. John at Bruges. Spared from the ruins of the Revolution, probably because of its noble work of mercy, this remnant of the middle ages stands in its ancient beauty, near the Church of Notre Dame, approached by a narrow moss-grown lane, ending in a great arched door. On one side of the quiet enclosure, shaded by linden-trees, a doorway opens into what

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would seem, at first sight, a church with nave and aisles supported by massive pillars, but that a glance shows the spectator the rows of beds which mark it as the great hospital-room. Here, it is said, Memling was found senseless at the gate, having worked his weary way home in 1477 from the expedition of Charles the Bold at Nancy. Taken in and tenderly nursed by the brothers, he painted, in gratitude, during his convalescence, the beautiful picture of the Marriage of S. Catherine, still in the hospital; and afterwards, the still more celebrated shrine of S. Ursula, in the chapel, saved by the care of the sisters from the revolutionary mob.

The Baptism of Christ, an altar-piece in the Academy of Bruges, is thought to be his chief work; and there is a beautiful painting of the Seven Joys of Mary, by him, in the Munich Gallery. One of his best pictures is the Last Judgment, in Danzig Cathedral, attributed erroneously to John Van Eyck. The S. Michael in the foreground of this picture is a beautiful figure; standing in the strength of his eternal youth, the sheen glancing on his golden armour, and the light from the Lord's rainbow seat falling on his purple mantle, and touching the prised edge of his peacock's wings. The Last Judgment in Bruges Cathedral, until lately ascribed to him, has

been shown by Mr. Weale to be by a painter named Cornelis. Of all the types of beauty in Northern religious art, Memling's is perhaps the sweetest and softest, and approaches the nearest to the ideal beauty of Italy,* where, indeed, his pictures were ever more favoured than those of any other German artist. It has been remarked, that if the landscape of John Van Eyck shone with the light of spring, Memling's glows with the richness of summer; the colour of the Flemish school strengthened and perfected by the poetry of his nature, and the deep religious feeling which pervaded his mind.

He passed away, to be quickly forgotten in his almost nameless grave; the date of his birth and death alike lost—unrecorded by chroniclers, and forgotten by historians.† He gathered up all that was purest and best in the school of the Van Eycks: without the force of Hubert, or the skill of John, he united in perfect discipline the qualities he did possess, and in striking a lower key, he attained in some respects a more perfect harmony. We feel, as

* Lord Lindsay, vol. iii. letter viii. p. 331.

† Vasari changed his name from Hans to Hausse, and the question of whether his other name was Hemling or Memling, has never been decided. M. Nieuwenhuys quotes, in confirmation of the probability of the former, the signature to the Marriage of S. Catherine in Bruges Hospital. See Bryan's 'Dictionary of Painters.'

we look on the sweet purity of his saints, and the tenderness and delicacy of his sunny landscapes, that we have lost much in knowing nothing of the life and history, the joys and sorrows, of him whom we might call the last of religious painters. How he preserved his love for Christian tradition, without pedantry or affectation, in earnest simplicity of faith, despite the evil influences of his age and country, we know not. We only know, that as was his painting, so must have been his life ; and that when the darkness was settling over the religious faith of Europe, and morality had sunk to the lowest depths of degradation, he at least must have lived his life in the faith and fear of God's commandments.

“ Moreover, by them are Thy servants taught :
And in keeping of them there is great reward.”

In considering the distinctive characteristics of German art, the principal thing which occurs to us as deciding its inferiority to that of Italy, is that strong tendency to the grotesque, which it seems to have developed in a more marked degree than even other Northern countries. Doubtless the character of the race took its impress from its surroundings, to a great extent ; and the flat grey land, unbroken save by monotony of trees, till it met a sky as cold and

misty as the landscape it looked down on, had much to do with that tendency to brooding melancholy and morbid contemplation of imperfection, which mark the German schools. Their painters were, as a rule, wholly lacking in imaginative power and idealism ; the best work of the Flemish schools being inspired solely by the external, though all-powerful, influence of religion ; and all true nobility of thought dying away with the extinction of Catholicism. This excessive tendency to the grotesque, which found such noble expression in the early Lombardic art, is, in its lower forms of development, probably incompatible with a great school of painting. It has produced very admirable results in moral teaching, in the hands of such earnest men as Albert Dürer ; but arising, as it does, from an impulse to exaggerate leading characteristics, and to dwell on forms incidental to imperfection and decay, it cannot be in itself a noble quality. We see the results of it in the work of John van Eyck, whose careful painting of all the wrinkles, warts, and other defects of the faces he depicted, blunted his perceptions of higher qualities in them, and tended, as he indulged more and more in this habit of looking at things, to deteriorate his work. And if this was the case with a painter of such true and high instincts as John van Eyck, how much more

fatal must this habit of mind have been, to the numerous inferior artists who formed his school. We know indeed that the end did come at last in hopeless degradation ; that the artists of Germany passed from complacently contemplating incidental forms of evil, such as coarseness, decay, or death, to rejoicing in them, and finally to looking for them, and insisting on them. And we know that the darkness of death did indeed fall on them, until they were no longer able to distinguish between good and evil ; and the dust which they had chosen became their portion, and only in the clay of which he was formed, could they see the likeness of man, made in the Image of God.

PICTURES BY PAINTERS OF THE FLEMISH
SCHOOL IN ENGLISH GALLERIES.

JOHN VAN EYCK.

<i>National Gallery</i>	1. Portraits of a Flemish merchant. 2. A man's portrait. 3. Another portrait.
<i>Liverpool Institute</i>	Madonna.
<i>Chatsworth</i>	Consecration of S. Thomas à Becket.
<i>Burleigh House</i>	Virgin, Child, and saints.
<i>Mr. Hope</i>	Virgin enthroned.
<i>Ince Hall</i>	Madonna.

ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN.

- National Gallery* The Deposition from the Cross.
Liverpool Institute Triptych. The Deposition.
Grosvenor House Triptych. Christ enthroned, with
 saints.
Mr. Parsons Head of Christ.
Ince Hall Virgin and Child.
Cobham Hall Portrait of a Reformer. *Called*
Holbein.

MEMLING.

- National Gallery* 1. Virgin and Child enthroned.
 2. Virgin and Child. 3. S. John
 Baptist, and S. Lawrence.
Hampton Court Portrait of a man.
Chiswick Madonna and Child enthroned,
 adored by Sir John Donne and
 his family.
Mr. Heath, of Enfield Small altar-piece of dead Christ.
Mr. Vernon Smith 1. Old Lady protected by a saint.
 2. A man protected by S.
 George.
Mr. Baring S. Jerome.
Dudley House Portrait of a man.
Holker Hall S. Christopher.
Gosford House Head of a saint.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEUTONIC SCHOOLS.—II.

				Born.		Died.
Albert Dürer	..	..	..	1471	..	1528

WE have already passed the confines of modern history, and left the middle ages behind us, in considering the works of the Renaissance painters of Rome and Florence, on the one hand, and on the other, those of the later realistic painters of Germany. For good and for evil, the age of mediæval Christianity had passed away before the end of the fifteenth century; and the same era closed over the spirit of mediæval art, with its child-like faith and love, and its child-like ignorance, as irrecoverable in history as in human life.

We have now to consider the consummation of Northern art in the two great painters of modern Germany—the Germany of the Reformation—Albert Dürer and Hans Holbein.

A brilliant era was dawning in Western Europe. The intellectual power of the Teutonic races would, ere long, awaken to life ; waiting only like the slumbering hero of one of their own legends, till the ravens had ceased to fly over the mountains. The shadows were fast falling over the brilliant court of the Roman Church, and her increasing licentiousness was calling down year by year more surely the judgments of God. She had been weighed in the balance and found wanting, and the decree had even then gone forth that her kingdom was departed. The innocent blood with which her hands were stained, had cried against her from the ground, for many a generation. John Huss had died a terrible death, excommunicated by the Church on earth, degraded from his priesthood, denied the last sacraments, the curses of his murderers mingling with his last calm prayer ; and with his blood were sown the seeds of a more destructive Reformation than he would have effected. Jerome of Prague had gone home scarcely less bravely through the fire of martyrdom, summoning his judges to meet him before the tribunal of Christ ; and all the best sympathies of Europe were with the Bohemian Reformers. In England, Wicklyffe, protected by the power of English law from the relentless fury of the Roman Church, had sown far and

wide the seeds of the Reformation. Condemned indeed, almost inevitably, by Convocation, he lived on unmolested in his quiet parish, remembered, heretic though he was, with pride and enthusiasm at Oxford.

Pass on a century, and we shall see another Reforming movement gathering, not to be stayed this time, by Pope, or Council, or King; led in England by noble John Colet; in Germany—alas for her!—less led, than let loose in unbridled licence, by Luther.

And now, having reminded our readers of the great event of the sixteenth century, which moulded the conditions of Dürer's life, and determined the phase of thought which formed the character of his art, we will ask them to look back with us, and see what the grand old town of Nürnberg was like, at the close of the middle ages. Those who have seen the departed grandeur of the still beautiful town, can imagine without much difficulty what it was in the days when wealthy merchant-princes lived in its palaces, and no less renowned goldsmiths worked in its streets, and when Albert Dürer and Willibald Pirckheimer were the pride and glory of its citizens. No other town in Europe, perhaps, offers so perfect a picture of the middle ages as Nürnberg. Here the Reformation has been, and, passing over, has left no traces of ruin

behind it. The churches are undesecrated, the carvings unmutilated, the palaces entire, the houses untouched, the very names of the citizens unchanged. The spirit of the middle ages rests upon it still ; and the same outlines of castle, and palaces, and narrow, picturesque streets, with horizon of solemn blue hills, meet our eye, as met daily the loving gaze of the great artist, who three hundred years ago was laid to rest in the old cemetery.

Nürnberg held a different and a more advantageous position than did any other German town in the middle ages. Its citizens were exempt from many of the burdens which harassed the inhabitants of the Netherland districts. Its government was an independent one, and chiefly in the hands of the hereditary patricians and merchant princes ; and the wealth of the town was so great, that it was said most of the household utensils in well-to-do families were of gold and silver. Commerce and art flourished there under an equitable government, and under circumstances more favourable than was possible elsewhere in Germany ; and it was the chief centre of independent thought, religious and scientific, in the country. Their goldsmith's work was deservedly renowned through Germany, preserved long from deterioration by the admirable rules of the guild, by

which the craft were forbidden to fill gold ornaments with false stones, or to gild brass or copper without special permission, or to work the metal, for any purpose, below a certain standard. No wonder their goldsmiths rose to such unrivalled reputation, founding families to which, as in Florence, the art was proudly transmitted from generation to generation.

Nürnberg had been famous throughout the middle ages among German cities for its plastic art ;* its Beautiful Fountain is still renowned among the most famous productions of German sculpture ; and the names of Veit Stoss the wood-carver, Kraft the sculptor, and Vischer the goldsmith, are as famous now—the first in his works of wood-carving, and the other two in S. Sebald's shrine and the Stations of the Cross—as when they lived and worked in the old city. Peter Vischer and his five sons were all metal-workers. In simple patriarchal fashion, these six men, their wives, and children, lived in one house, the men working day after day with their own hands in the foundry, and together accomplishing, after twelve years' united labour, their exquisite master-piece of the bronze shrine, “to the glory of Almighty God alone, and to the honour of S. Sebald, prince of heaven.”

* See Lübke's ‘History of Sculpture,’ vol. i.

It is at this period that we begin to see the change towards realistic art in Nürnberg; the year 1450 being a central point which may fairly mark the transition. Michael Wohlgemuth, whose work extends over this half-century, and who is better known as the master of Albert Dürer than by his own reputation, was among the foremost in adopting the new ideas.

Born of a race of Hungarian herdsmen, Dürer's father had inherited a talent for, and received an education in, the goldsmith's craft, from his father, who had left his simple shepherd life, and wandered to Jula to learn the famous trade. The son, having been brought up in the same craft, and lived for a time in the Netherlands, bethought him that he might make his way better among the celebrated goldsmiths of Nürnberg. So thither the elder Dürer found his way; and, as it befell, entered the city on the feast of the great saint-goldsmith of Limoges, Bishop Eloy. It seemed like a good omen for the young adventurer. The citizens were making holiday that day, for it was the wedding-day of Pirkheimer, the head of one of the great patrician families of the town; and the first sight that Dürer had in Nürnberg was the dance and feast round the old linden-tree of Queen Kunigunde, little thinking that the son of that marriage, the brilliant Willibald Pirkheimer,

would be, in the times to come, the dearest friend and best patron of his own son Albert.

So in Nürnberg he served his apprenticeship ; and in 1467, after twelve years' service, won his freedom, and with it the hand of his master's daughter, the young Barbara Haller.

This history, with brief notices of the early married life of his father and mother, was transcribed by Dürer from his father's diary. Eighteen children were born to the marriage, amidst many pecuniary struggles and anxieties, of whom Albert was the third, born in 1471 : only two others besides himself survived. Of his own early life, we only know the few facts recorded in his diary—that he went to school ; that when he had learned to read and write, his father took him home to teach him his own craft ; and that finding Albert's heart set on being a painter, he gave an unwilling consent, and apprenticed him to Michael Wohlgemuth for three years, on S. Andrew's Day, in 1486. His first portrait of himself, drawn when thirteen, "while still a child," as in after years he wrote under it, is now at Vienna,* preserved by him through life, perhaps in memory of happy child-

* A copy of it is in Dürer's sketch-book, preserved in the British Museum.

hood, and little dreaming how it would be valued in the ages to come. It is a beautiful face, and one full of interest to all who know the life of Albert Dürer. There, in promise, is all the mingled sweetness and earnestness, gentleness and passion, tenderness and strength, which his noble manhood fulfilled ; the far-off look in the serious eyes throwing a premature shadow over the childish features.

Having served his apprenticeship, he went abroad for four years, according to the custom of young German students of art ; and returning in the Whitsuntide of 1494, found that his father had arranged a marriage for him with a daughter of one of the Nürnberg burghers, the beautiful Agnes Frey. It is mentioned very briefly in his diary, as though it were a matter in which he felt neither interest nor responsibility, and we have no key to his real feelings on the subject. Perhaps his life had hitherto been so engrossed with the love of his art, the excitement of foreign travel, and the enjoyment of laying up stores of fresh knowledge, as to have left him no time to think of love ; so that when, after the fashion of the age, his father negotiated for a desirable wife for him, he acquiesced indifferently in the arrangement. The elder Dürer, good man that he was, must have lived to repent of his share in the marriage

which so marred the life of his favourite son. The beauty which Agnes possessed, did not atone for the absence of all the qualities which could make a home happy. Her avarice, her temper, and her heartlessness, must have been to the warm-hearted, high-minded man, a source of lifelong sorrow and weariness. No children compensated for the loneliness of his home ; and the only glimpses which we catch of Dürer's bright, loving character, are in his relations to his family, and his correspondence with Pirkheimer.

It was in 1500, when not quite thirty years of age, that Dürer painted the portrait of himself, now in the Munich Gallery, by which his face is best known to us. Long curling hair falls over a massive forehead, and makes a frame-work for the majestic features, which, as has been often observed, remind one most strikingly of the ideal conception of our Lord's face. It is said that everything about the man, even to the delicacy of his hands and the melody of his voice, harmonised with his singular beauty, and completed the fascination of his presence. Gifted, indeed, with such a unison of powers of mind, and soul, and body, as falls to the lot of but few among the sons of men, we feel more sadly of him than of most other great men, that his life was marred, his soul darkened, and

his work distorted, through no fault of his. On that inner life he preserves profound silence; and seldom, even in his diary, do we catch a glimpse of it. No bitterness of thought, or asperity of expression, concerning the woman who had so chilled his home life, is ever suffered to escape his pen; and he would have carried his secret to the grave, but for the outspoken indignation of his warm-hearted friend Pirkheimer. A letter from the latter to a friend at Vienna, written after Dürer's death, throws the only light we have, on the wretchedness of his home. Pirkheimer is sure that his friend's life has been shortened by worry; says that the only thing his wife cared for was money, and that she goaded him on to work night and day, so that she might be left in wealthy circumstances; looking on his art, as Dürer once wrote to Pirkheimer half in jest, as a milch-cow. Pirkheimer had, he says, often expostulated with her, but had never met with aught but ingratitude for anything he had said or done; and that, in fact, whoever was her husband's friend was her enemy. She will not have anything to do with him now that Dürer is dead, he says, and he is rather glad of it, since for his part he would rather "have to do with a light woman, than with such a nagging, suspicious, scolding," pious one.

One hint only is afforded us in his sketches of that inner life, of which we know so little—one suggestion that at some time or other the depths of his soul had been stirred by a woman's hand, and a brief vision of earthly happiness dawned on him. A sketch of a woman's head remains, under it written "My Augusta;" and another of a figure in Nürnberg costume, entering a church, with the sacred motto beneath, "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." So, in that solemn prayer, he shrouded from human eyes, for ever, the depths of unutterable thoughts.

Very pathetic is his account of his father's and mother's deaths. At the former, he was not present; but he notes down the details with loving accuracy, mourning that he was not "found worthy to be with him at his end;" and his brief description of the death-bed, and the old nurse rousing herself, as she saw that the soul was passing, to trim the lamp and drone out S. Bernard's dying hymn, is vivid as one of his own sketches. This was in 1502.

In 1503, he seems to have had an illness, of which no mention is made; for a drawing of the Lord's head crowned with thorns, in the British Museum, bears this date, with the inscription, "I drew this face in my sickness." That face, which "in his sick-

ness" first came to him, was also the last thought of his life, left unfinished on the easel.

In 1505, or the next year, he went on an expedition to Venice, which he already knew, and where he probably hoped to increase his connection, and make his name better known. The three great Venetians were all painting there at the time of Dürer's visit—Giorgione and Titian, then at the height of their brilliant fame; and Giovanni Bellini, a very old man, and having perhaps outlived the reverence which his exquisite Madonnas had won him, amidst the insolence of the new school; but "the best painter among them," Dürer tells us, "and a good man." "He praised me much," he adds. In one of his letters to Pirkheimer, he tells a story which shows his wonderful power of drawing, and the esteem in which he must have been held at Venice. Bellini paid him a visit one day, and being much struck with the fineness of Dürer's touch, asked him as a special favour to give him the brush he used for such delicate lines. Dürer offered him a number to choose from. Bellini explained that the one he wanted was that which Dürer used for long fine lines. Dürer then took up one of them, and painted a long tress of hair before Bellini, who said that he "could not have believed it, had he not seen it."

The Venetian artists seem to have treated him badly on the whole, and to have been jealous of him ; but he appears to have been very happy, notwithstanding, amidst the beauty and the splendour of the glorious city, beyond the reach of the daily worries of his Nürnberg life, and satisfied that his household was well cared for by Pirkheimer in his absence. "Here I am a gentleman," he writes, half jestingly, to Pirkheimer ; "at home I am only a parasite ;" showing the different positions which Italian and German artists respectively occupied in their own countries. He is never forgetful, though, of his home responsibilities, and reminds his friends, in one of his letters, to look after his young brother, who he fears will be "lost among the women-folk." In 1507 he returned, refusing the offer made him by the republic of a pension of two hundred ducats. Probably it was somewhat of a temptation to him to stay in the beautiful city where he had spent two such pleasant years, with a prospect of success greater than Nürnberg appeared to offer at that time ; but duty, and affection for his native city, both called him home, and he refused the offer, and returned, to be thenceforth the master of German art.

About this time he began to occupy his leisure time by writing verses, in which, however, though

he wrote a good many, he does not seem to have attained much success. There was, in fact, more force than beauty in his rhythms, although such verses as those on the Hours of the Passion are beautiful from their simple earnest devotion. They end with this prayer :—

“ O Almighty Lord and God,
Who the martyr's press hast trod ;
Jesus, the only God, the Son,
Who all this to Thyself hast done,
Keep it before us to-day and to-morrow,
Give us continual rue and sorrow ;
Wash me clean and make me well,
I pray Thee, like a soul from hell.
Lord, Thou hast overcome ; look down ;
Let us at last to share the crown.” *

His mother, whom he had taken to his home since the old man's death, died in 1514, and with her probably passed away the last sympathy of his home life. She had buried fifteen out of her eighteen children ; had suffered “ poverty, scoffing, spiteful words, and great reverses ; ” yet it would seem she had tried to fight the battle of life bravely, to “ keep her children from sin,” and to “ do all in the Name of Christ ; ” and mournfully tender as are Dürer's reflections, he does not regret her departure.

* ‘ Albert Dürer and his Works,’ by Mr. W. B. Scott.

“And in her death,” he concludes, “she looked still more lovely than she was in her life. . . . God the Lord grant that I also make a blessed end ; and that God, with His heavenly hosts, and my father, mother, and friend, be present at my end.”

Various causes probably led Dürer finally to adopt engraving as the vehicle for his thoughts. Public attention was being turned to the new method of drawing, which the Emperor Maximilian largely patronised, and which was yearly placing art within the reach of all persons of moderate means. The immense and increasing sale for engravings made this branch of art a more certain way of gaining a livelihood ; while, at the same time, it gave, by its rapidity, free scope for an inexhaustible imagination like Dürer's. With such a reputation as Dürer possessed throughout Germany and Italy, he would probably have rapidly become wealthy from the sale of his engravings, had not fraud grown up side by side with the new invention. Marc Antonio, the most able engraver in Italy, copied Dürer's woodcuts so perfectly, that it became impossible to distinguish these from the originals ; and by the sale of his own impressions made large sums of money on Dürer's reputation. Foreign governments gave little or no protection against this system ; and the only

promise which Dürer could extract from the Venetians, was that his monogram should not appear in the pirated woodcuts.

The earliest engravings bearing Dürer's monogram are the series of sixteen on the Revelation, dated 1511—wonderful in their imaginative power, wild and weird, and impossible to describe, even if we had space to do so. The second series are a life of the blessed Virgin, for whose history Dürer always seems to have had a special sympathy and devotion. Entirely realistic as these drawings are, Dürer's own innate reverence has struck a chord of devotional tenderness which removes them far above the representations of other artists of the same school and period. In the same year were published the twelve engravings of the "Great Passion," and also the series of thirty-seven, called the "Little Passion," but really representing the history of the Redemption, from the Fall to the Resurrection Day. These last are well known in England, having been printed in a popular form,* with letterpress from Scripture, from a set which the British Museum possesses. The title-pages of both these Passion

* By Archdeacon Allen in 1856; called 'The Humiliation and Exaltation of our Redeemer. It is now out of print.

sets are similar, and seem intended to symbolise our Lord as the Man of Sorrows. The moment is chosen when, stripped of the "gorgeous robe," He sits alone and despised, with the reed still in His Hand, the Wounds in His Feet and Hands, anticipating the consummation of the Sacrifice.

Best known, perhaps, of all his engravings is that typical representation of German mysticism, known as 'The Knight and Death.'* Fantastic in conception, unfathomable in thought, suggesting many things to many minds, a grave morality to all, the secret of its fascination perhaps lies in its mystery. It is the type of the Teutonic mind—grotesque, mysterious, and solemn. None know now the meaning of that stalwart figure, with its grim companions; yet the thoughts which it suggests have found an echo far and wide. Death, as a dread personality, comes often before Dürer's mind. He meets the soldier, ready for him, in the churchyard; looks from behind a tree at the knight and lady absorbed in their conversation; stands behind a young lady as she sits at her looking-glass. It was

* For the best explanation of this picture, intended, it is supposed, by Dürer to have been called 'Fortitude,' see 'Modern Painters,' vol. v. part ix. chap. iv. p. 243. The whole chapter called "Dürer and Salvator" bears on this subject.

an idea which the morbid German imagination easily fastened on, and it grew and strengthened, as year by year the faith of Christian Europe, in the religion which had ruled the world for a thousand years, became obscured. Death was among the few unquestionable facts ; death, the strong man armed, the mocking skeleton, the avenging fate. And the Resurrection stands no more in the world's Campo Santo, side by side with the Triumph of Death, proclaiming its unending victory. But Dürer's strong, calm mind looked the problem full in the face, and, neither playing with it in morbid satire, like his German contemporaries, nor recoiling from it in the horror of the Renaissance spirit, gave answer in the Sin conquered and Death overcome by the finished life of the Christian soldier.

Perhaps the most beautiful of all Dürer's engravings is that of S. Eustachius. Most of our readers know the legend of the young man, sometimes called S. Hubert, sometimes S. Eustace, who went hunting on Good Friday, and to whom a stag appeared, bearing on his horns the image of the Crucified One ; how the Lord spoke and reproved him ; how he worshipped, and resolved thenceforth to become an earnest Christian, and, as the story goes, was martyred under Trajan. Looking at this beautiful group—the

kneeling figure surrounded by horse and hounds, and frame-work of sweet wooded landscape and distant scenery throwing a glamour over all—one cannot but feel that Dürer's sympathies were less with the spirit of realism in art and inquiry in religion, which characterised his age, than with the loving faith of mediæval Christendom.

In 1511 he painted the Adoration of the Crucified *—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me"—one of his best efforts at painting, it is thought. It was executed as an altar-piece for the chapel of a small alms-house in Nürnberg, whence it was taken possession of by Rudolph II. a century after, and carried to Vienna. God the Father is enthroned in the midst, sitting on a rainbow, and holding the cross, on which hangs the Saviour of the world, outstretched for the adoration of mankind; the Holy Spirit above, surrounded by Seraphim. All around

* I have never seen either the picture or any representation of it. But Mr. St. John Tyrwhitt, writing from Vienna, immediately after having seen it, expressed himself as much struck by its beauty. "There is in it," he says, "immense labour culminating in intense brilliancy of colour—pure pale crimsons like Angelico's in the angels' wings—while the Turneresque effect of the earth, far below in distance, is very remarkable to a landscape painter." In the same letter, Mr. Tyrwhitt adds, "The wonderful studies of hands in white, on sky-blue paper, which are preserved in the Albertina collection, seem quite unknown to Dürer's multitudinous biographers."

are the representatives of the Christian world. Emperors, kings, nobles, burghers, peasants, in one part ; popes, bishops, cardinals, and religious, in another. On one side is a beautiful group of saints, led by the blessed Virgin, with palms and crowns and distinctive symbols, fading gradually off into a multitude of waving palms and glancing crowns ; on the other side are the prophets, apostles, and fathers of the Church. The picture is altogether remarkable as showing in its motive and design, in a more marked degree than any other of Dürer's, his appreciation of, and sympathy with, mediæval religious art.

Dürer was first employed by the Emperor Maximilian in 1512 ; but although he did a great deal of work for the emperor, involving much time and labour, and was appointed a pension of one hundred florins, he had the greatest difficulty in getting his money ; and altogether the office of court painter was a very unprofitable one to him. In 1515 and two or three succeeding years, Dürer was summoned to Augsburg by Maximilian, to paint the palace there. Here he made many interesting sketches of historical characters, and drew for the emperor the borders of the celebrated prayer-book now at Munich. About this time also, whether at Augsburg or after his return, he began to etch ; and the discovery of using

acid in the engraving of the plates is attributed by some writers to him, while others claim it for Lucas Van Leyden.

In 1519 the emperor died ; and this event seems to have decided Dürer to take the Netherland journey, of which he has left us a full record in his journal, and which he had probably contemplated for some time, as a means of advancing the sale of his works. His nominal object in hastening to Antwerp was to be present at the new emperor's reception, and to press his interest to be nominated as court painter to Charles V. He started in the summer of 1520. At Antwerp he seems to have had a pleasant time, honoured and courted by all. Here he met and made acquaintance with Erasmus, who offered him, he says, "a Spanish mantle, and three drawings," Dürer giving him in return a Passion set. It was at this time that he made the sketch for a portrait which Erasmus refers to in several letters. The splendour of the churches and services seems to have struck him much, and with an almost childish delight he describes minutely a procession of Notre Dame—"an enchanting spectacle." It must indeed have been a wonderful sight. It was two hours, says Dürer, in passing the house. All the guilds of the city were in it, splendidly arrayed, the goldsmiths

occupying the place of honour ; and all the religious and secular orders and professions were represented. There were also persons dressed to represent different saints ; and legends, such as S. Margaret and the Dragon, and events of sacred history, acted. " There were so many things," concludes the simple-minded artist, " that I never could write them all down even in a book, and so I let it alone." The same child-like delight in beautiful things, breaks out in his enthusiastic admiration for the rare things from the new " land of gold " ; " as beautiful to behold as they are wonderful ; . . . I have never in all the days of my life seen anything that has so much rejoiced my heart as these things, . . . and I do not know how to express what I think about them." Towards the end of the year he obtained, " with great labour and much ado," through the interest of his Nürnberg friends, the ratification of his office as court painter to the new emperor. In one part of his diary, and in the same entry of expenses, are the curious items of " Luther's tractate for five white-pennies, one for the condemnation of that mighty man, and one for a rosary."

In the next year, leaving his wife at Antwerp, he made an independent expedition to Zealand, where, it would seem, were sown the seeds of the

disease, whatever it was, which ended fatally, a few years afterwards. "A wonderful illness came upon me," he records, "which I had never heard of anyone having before."

His calm strength of character comes out in an accident he describes as taking place during one of his short voyages in Zealand. They were just about to land, all the sailors except the captain having left the boat, and only Dürer, the cabin-boy, and two old women remaining in the boat with him, when a ship ran into them, and their cable breaking, they were drifted out to sea. The captain lost his head, and resigned himself to despair. But Dürer, in his quiet way, told him to take courage and put his trust in God, and try with his help to hoist a sail; and thus the boat was saved.

On returning to Antwerp at Whitsuntide, the tidings meets him that Luther is taken—as it was then thought, to his death—on his way from the Diet of Worms. A passionate sorrowful cry from the depths of Dürer's earnest soul, finds vent in his diary at this, as it was thought, tragical end of the man to whom many yet looked as the successor of S. Francis, inspired to preach an unalloyed Gospel, and inaugurate an era of uncorrupted religious life. A national Church, freed from the tyranny of Rome,

yet one with all Churches in Christ ; governed with equity, purity, and moderation, was the dream then, as now, of the best and noblest sons of the Catholic Church. It might even have been fulfilled, spite of the iron grasp of the Papal power, had Luther been true to himself and his mission. "Lord Jesus Christ," prays Dürer, "call Thy sheep from all lands now wandering, some in the Roman Church, some among Indians, Muscovites and Greeks, separate from each other by the pretensions of Popes. . . . Give us a new Jerusalem, clothed with the beauty written of in the Revelation ; a new Gospel cleared from human commentaries." He cannot understand why Erasmus, committed to the same cause as Luther, should be silent now, and marvels that he shrinks back from the championship of the Reformation, and is not so eager as his own burning spirit would have been in like case, "to win the martyr's crown." We at this distance of time can better appreciate the vastness of the distance which separated the two Reformers. Erasmus, coming to England in 1497, had been received with open arms at Oxford by the brilliant little set then gathered there—Colet, Grocyn, Lineacre, and the young More ; and had stayed there to learn at Colet's feet, fascinated alike by the depth of his knowledge and the beauty of his holiness. For

Colet had travelled in France and Italy, and studied theology deeply in both countries. He had also seen the awful wickedness of the brilliant court of Alexander VI., and the licentiousness of Florence: he had heard the burning words of Savonarola, and marked the gathering hatred of the Roman Church for the great Reformer; and he had come home with a fixed and solemn resolution to give up the brilliant career which awaited him at court, and reform the English Church, while yet there was time. A man of such combined learning, culture, and piety, as could hardly have been matched in that age, no wonder that he formed the character, and decided the work of Erasmus' life, and that, carrying the remembrance of Colet and his teaching through all his long life, Erasmus recoiled from the noisy demonstrations and revolutionary efforts of Luther, as fatal in their tendencies to the interests of religion. Year by year he withdrew more from the strife which, watching wearily and hopelessly, he knew must end in irrevocable disaster; and Dürer, marking his silence, and looking out through the darkness, longed, as doubtless did many another soul, in that terrible struggle, for some watch-word, some banner round which to rally. "Watchman, what of the night?" must have been the eager cry of many earnest souls like Dürer's. No

answer came then. The darkness had yet to fall over the twilight, and another morning should dawn on their dying eyes, ere the question should be set at rest to them for ever. Happier those called home, amidst whatever of perplexity and doubt, still clinging to the faith of their forefathers, than those of the next generation, who knew no other spiritual home than the restless waves of the Reformation-flood, in the Germany of twenty years later.

We pass quickly through the few uneventful remaining years of Dürer's life. His journal ends abruptly, and we do not know the exact date of his return to Nürnberg. He seems to have been more prosperous during the latter part of his life; for although he records the fact that he has lost rather than gained by his tour in the Netherlands, we find him writing to the council after his return, asking them, for his good service as a citizen, to take a thousand florins and give him good interest for them. He has been offered, he pleads, by the Doge of Venice a pension of two hundred ducats, and by the Antwerp authorities three hundred florins and a house, and he refused both offers, for love of his native city. The interest which the council gave him, with the sale of his engravings, brought him in a sufficiently good income to enable him now to

paint at his leisure. It was during these last years that he completed several well-known portraits; Melancthon, Erasmus, Pirkheimer, and others. He also made several engravings of the legend of S. Christopher and other saints. His last great work was the painting of the four Apostles, which he bequeathed to the citizens of Nürnberg as a memorial of himself. They were treasured by the city for about a hundred years, at the end of which time the Elector Maximilian took possession of them and carried them to Munich, where they now hang. Four majestic, life-sized figures, free from the crudeness and irregularity of earlier work, solemn and beautiful, they stand as a type of the finished earthly work of the grand and noble mind which conceived them. The last of his own portraits was finished about the same time, the long curling hair and beard and moustache gone, probably cut off during his illness, since in his picture painted at Antwerp by Tommaso Vincidore, he still wears them. And thus we may trace the face of the great German master from eager wistful childhood to the dawn of splendid manhood, and on to premature old age, when the delicate, melancholy face wears the shadow of coming death.

So, in his beautiful native city, for love of which he had refused the wealth and luxury which other

lands had offered him, he passed, almost imperceptibly, towards that rest for which he had begun to look and long. Far away now, the time when his young buoyant spirit had chafed and fretted against the dreary home life, the low-minded wife, the childless house. Patience had done her perfect work in the beautiful character, so lofty in imaginative power, so simple in faith and love, so mighty in its influence, yet so confined in its apparently petty outward conditions. He could look forward now with unalloyed peace to that "blessed end" with the unseen presences of father, mother, friend, and angels, around him, as he passed through the valley of the shadow of death. We may well think that the din and tumult of conflicting opinions have faded from his ears, as he hears the voice which calls him to the Land where faith is lost in sight. The broad calm faith which has carried him safely through the stormy night in which so many others have made shipwreck of their spiritual lives, is not likely to fail him as the morning dawns for him over the fields of Paradise.

A rare soul was that of Albert Dürer. One of those priceless characters his, which no sorrow embitters, no lovelessness chills, no evil overcomes, in which enthusiasm never withers into fanaticism.

Fresh and young to the last, he was always learning, ever receiving new impressions, and gathering in new sympathies, to throw them out again through the light of his own broad mind. "With the hands of a craftsman and the soul of a king,"* had his lot fallen in another age and country, his work might have ranked beside that of the great masters of Italy.

In that last Lent of his life (1528) Dürer had occupied his failing strength in painting a Christ bearing the Cross. Figure, dress, hair, all were finished; the face he had lingered over, leaving it for his last meditation. But ere that Passion-tide was quite over, the tired hand was at rest for ever; the eyes, whose last earthly task had been to gaze on the thorn-crowned Head, had re-opened their weary sight on the Vision of Beauty. His prayer had been heard, and he taken home to keep his Easter in the "New Jerusalem."

Along the 'Way of the Cross,' under the shadow of those wonderful 'Stations' of Adam Kraft's, they carried him to his rest in the ancient cemetery of S. John. Pirkheimer wrote the short inscription, which marks the grave of his "dear friend, now dead in the Lord." Scarcely two years more passed ere he was laid by Dürer's side.

* 'Edinburgh Review,' July 1861, on Albert Dürer.

WORKS BY ALBERT DÜRER IN BRITISH
GALLERIES.*

<i>Buckingham Palace</i>	A Virgin and Child.
<i>Fitzwilliam Museum, Cam-</i> <i>bridge</i>	} An Annunciation.
<i>Kensington Palace</i>	
<i>Windsor Castle</i>	Portrait of Pirkheimer.
<i>National Gallery</i>	Portrait of a senator.
<i>British Museum</i>	1. A volume of sketches. 2. Ten mounted drawings. 3. A small carving in soapstone of the birth of S. John Baptist.
<i>Hamilton Palace</i>	1. His own portrait. 2. Portrait.
<i>Late Lord Northwick</i>	Maximilian I.
<i>Chatsworth</i>	Three drawings.
<i>Bath House</i>	Portrait of a man in armour.
<i>Burleigh House</i>	S. Eustachius.
<i>Broughton Hall</i>	A picture.
<i>Howard Castle</i>	1. Vulcan. 2. Adam and Eve. 3. Abraham and Isaac.
<i>Mr. Wynn Ellis</i>	1. Portrait of Catherine Fürleger. 2. Virgin and Child.
<i>Longford Castle</i>	Virgin and Child enthroned.
<i>Sion House</i>	Portrait of Dürer's father.
<i>Stow</i>	The Maid of Orleans.
<i>Stafford House</i>	Death of the Virgin.

* Mr. Scott's book has the best catalogue yet made of Dürer's works.

CHAPTER X.

THE TEUTONIC SCHOOLS.—III.

			Born.		Died.
Hans Holbein	..	..	1495	..	1543

HANS HOLBEIN, born more than five-and-twenty years after Albert Dürer, and representing the thoughts and tendencies of his age far more than did the great Nürnberg artist, belongs to modern history in a sense which Dürer does not. The history of Christian art among the Teutonic nations closes with Holbein; it might be said more truly, with Dürer, but that Holbein occupied, before he came to England, a peculiar position between the old and new schools, and had it in his power, as no other man before or since, to choose between them. He might have taken up religious art where Dürer left it, and perhaps carried it through the storms of the Reformation. His fine perception of beauty, and absence of that morbid temper which characterised German art, would have made him in another age a great religious painter; and his early

works show great tenderness and true devotional feeling. But in espousing the side of the German Reformation, he chose a negative standpoint, which involved of necessity no religious convictions, and which was fatal then, as it has been ever since, to the production of Christian teaching in art. It is not for us to say that the great founder of English portrait-painting chose amiss in renouncing a falling school of art, and in seeking, in our own more prosperous England, fame and wealth impossible in his fatherland; a shallower man than Dürer, he must not be judged by the same high moral and spiritual standard. Yet it is not without sadness that we contemplate the final rejection, by the first artist of his age, of those spiritual influences which it is the mission of art to exercise over the soul of man. We have seen how the power of religious faith has softened and refined Teutonic art, despite the materialism of the character of the race; casting a spell of quietness over its gloomy imagination, and finding wholesome vent for its morbid fancies in the spiritual symbolism of its grotesque representations. All this is over now, and Protestantism reigns supreme; its symbol, Death's escutcheon, the bones and skull crowned by the hour-glass.*

* The 'Escutcheon of Death' completes the series of Holbein's 'Dance of Death.'

Augsburg, the great commercial capital of Southern Germany, was at the height of its splendour in the last twenty years of the fifteenth century. And as in Nürnberg, the home of Albert Dürer, we may see the undeseccrated remains of the middle ages, so here, in the city which has been called the "German Pompeii of the Renaissance," we may study the art of another age, in the beautiful Renaissance city which remains to this day almost unchanged. There Hans Holbein the Elder lived and painted; and in that centre of early Renaissance magnificence, amidst the stateliness and beauty of its halls and palaces and shining fountains, the young Holbein grew up.

It appears probable, from an inscription discovered by Dr. Waagen, on the earliest remaining painting of Holbein's, that he was born in 1495. Much discussion has arisen from time to time on the subject, but Dr. Woltmann* has accepted this date. This work is now in the Augsburg Gallery, and consists of four paintings, which were originally altar-panels—painted, as usual, on both sides. The inside represents the death of S. Catherine, the patron saint of the town; the crucifixion of S. Peter, and the Virgin and Child, being on the outside. Holbein

* 'Life of Holbein.'

was only seventeen when he painted this. Two other well-known early works are the S. Sebastian altar-piece and the Madonna with the Lily;* the latter very soft and sweet and tender in feeling; the former, perhaps one of the most beautiful religious pictures in the world. For in the figures of the S. Sebastian† triptych, especially in the S. Barbara and S. Elizabeth of the side-panels, realistic and symbolic art were united as never, perhaps, before or since. Perfectly true to life, but entirely reverent, they are enhanced by no golden glory, or splendour of colour and vestment; saintly faces, too human to be adored, yet solemn in their freedom from all taint of mortal frailty. So, we may well believe, shall we behold the bodies of God's saints on the Resurrection morning.

In, or nearly the same year in which this picture was painted (1515), Holbein left Augsburg, where, indeed, he had never worked independently, but only under his father, as an apprentice, and went to try his fortune in the great centre of Protestantism and the Renaissance, Basle, where he received the

* Belonging to Herr Hug, at Ragatz.

† In the Munich Gallery. The S. Barbara and S. Elizabeth have long been there, ascribed to the elder Holbein; lately the centre-piece of S. Sebastian has been added from Augsburg.

freedom of the city in 1520. With his life at Augsburg ends the first epoch of his painting. In leaving his native city, and making his home within the heart of the Protestant movement, Holbein made the choice which decided his career as an artist. From henceforth he ceased to be a religious painter, and though still continuing to represent, according to the necessities of the age, sacred persons and subjects, it is always with a realism which verges on irreverence and divests of sacredness. The sudden change which passed over his work after settling at Basle, is indeed very curious, and seems to point to some great alteration in the tenour of his life. That the same man who painted the lovely figures of the S. Sebastian triptych, should, only six years afterwards, have painted the almost revolting picture of the Dead Christ* (1521), and the coarse figures of the Basle organ, argues a change neither slight nor superficial, but one which must have metamorphosed his whole life. It is thought that Mantegna,† who, more than any other Italian, influenced Northern art, was specially studied by Holbein. Mantegna's wonderful skill in chiaro-scuro, perspective, and all the technical qualities which perfected the

* In the Basle Museum.

† Woltmann, chap. vii. p. 122.

realist school of art, would be certain to fascinate Holbein, who inherited all those tendencies towards materialism, characteristic of the Northern races. We cannot indeed tell by what means—whether by travelling, or only by the help of prints—he became a student of Mantegna; but there seems little doubt that this was the case, and one evidence of its probability is in the fact that he used Roman dresses, instead of the costume of his period, for the figures in his Passion scenes; knowledge of ancient classic costumes being one of the most remarkable features in Mantegna's paintings.

Of this period of Holbein's life—the years between that in which he first went to Basle, and the time in which he received the freedom of the city and guild—we know nothing. He was probably moving from place to place, pursuing his studies; it is, at any rate, known that he resided at Lucerne for a time, and a drawing of a Madonna in the Basle Museum has a landscape background representing the scenery of that place. Among Holbein's early works at Basle, there remains the portrait of the Burgomaster Meier, for whom the celebrated Madonna of that name was painted; but a large proportion of his youthful work there was of a perishable kind, consisting of the façade-painting then so universal

in the Swiss districts, and for which Holbein was probably in much request, having brought this branch of art to great perfection. It is indeed to the famous Amerbach, the printer, who cherished art equally with letters, that we owe the existence of nearly all of Holbein's works which compose the Basle collection; for the greater part of his public works were destroyed in the general ruin of the Reformation. The date of the Passion set in the Basle Museum is not known, but in them we see that Holbein had for ever renounced devotional painting, and recognised the dramatic and historic as the only motives worthy of art. The insistence on the bodily agony of the Passion, to the loss of the idea of the Divinity of Christ—the dwelling on ferocity and all evil passions in the tormentors—these and such tendencies painfully exaggerated, show that Holbein ceased from this time to regard art as a means of expressing Christian faith or teaching. Some of a series of etched Passion scenes, touched by the master's hand, are in the British Museum.

There was, perhaps, no city in Europe at this period which was so great a centre of intellectual life and culture as Basle, so that it was said that there was hardly a house in it without a learned man; and it became the refuge of those who were

driven from other cities, in the opposition to the progress of free thought. The first paper-mill of Germany was established there, and as early as 1474 the first book was printed, inaugurating that important series which issued from the famous Basle press. Amerbach, the noble old man who, with the help of Froben and Langendorf, had devoted his wealth and learning, thirty years before, to founding the printing-press which was now attracting to Basle so many scholars and theologians, had been editing, for some time, one by one, the Fathers of the early Church, Froben assisting him ; and his one last wish was to see S. Jerome placed with the edition before his death. To Basle then came Erasmus, to publish his Greek Testament and S. Jerome, a few years before Holbein made it his home, and there, in 1514, we find the two working together at the Praise of Folly, Holbein coming before us in it, for the first time, as the great satirist of his age. How thoroughly he entered, with his wonderful power of caricature, into Erasmus's vein of humour, may be seen in the curious copy of this book, illustrated by him, and now in the Basle Museum. It is said that Holbein's moral character, which has certainly been under a cloud in modern times, was unintentionally injured by a joke which Erasmus

played on him in this work. Holbein having introduced a sketch of Erasmus in one of the margins, which amused the latter very much, in playful retaliation Erasmus turned over the page, and wrote the name of Holbein over the figure of a drunkard seated at a table, with a woman by his side, and a pot of beer before him. There is no evidence whatever to prove that Holbein was a dissolute character; nor does history throw the slightest stain on his life, which, if not blameless, was probably far above the average standard of that immoral age. He did indeed live apart from his wife from the time of his leaving Basle, probably from motives of economy; and it must be added that it is probable that the two children left, at his death, in England were illegitimate. That he was worldly, somewhat selfish, and fond of luxury and pleasure, may well have been; such were probably the special temptations of his bright, merry, genial character; but his keen intellectual face, as we know it in his portrait of himself,* bears no marks of self-indulgence; and in that most sure test of a man's life, his work, there is no taint of sensuality.†

* In the Basle Museum.

† Perhaps this is saying a little too much. Some of the scenes in his Alphabets are very coarse.

Holbein's time was now probably fully occupied in illustrating the books which came rapidly from Froben's press. Editions of the New Testament, the Fathers, and the learned writers of the age, were more or less illustrated, to comply with the growing demand. From the mystical to the pathetic, from the solemn to the grotesque, nothing came amiss to his mind or pencil. His woodcuts* of the Revelation are very fine, though not so grand as Dürer's. His satire is keen without coarseness, his fun inimitably clever; all qualities together playing in and out of his marginal etchings. His irresistible love of caricature made him, however, somewhat dangerous, and his satires against the Catholics met with wholesale destruction, so that comparatively few of his etchings remain. It is in them that we see Holbein as the representative mind of his age, embodying the popular thoughts and feelings, giving outward expression to the religious and social tendencies which were revolutionising Northern Europe—led by, not guiding, the spirit of his age. His mind, far less profound than Dürer's, passed lightly over the great problems which were overshadowing greater souls, and darken-

* That Holbein did not himself cut his blocks seems to be decided now. See Woltmann, chap. xii. p. 203. Hans Lützelburger was the name of the engraver.

ing nobler lives than his. Untroubled by deep convictions on either side, he contented himself with satirising the abuses, and lashing the sins of the Church and her ministers, at once expressing and exciting the feelings of the people. A satire on the sale of indulgences, of which a copy is in the Bodleian Library, has escaped the general destruction. The Pope, surrounded by bishops, is giving a letter of indulgence to a Dominican friar; three Dominicans, further on, sell these indulgences at a table. Outside the scene, David, Manasseh, and the Prodigal Son, types of real repentance, are received by God. Another of these satires is called '*Christus vera Lux*,' and there is a copy of it in the British Museum. In the midst is a lighted candle, Christ preaching beside it to a crowd of citizens and peasants. On the other side, priests and monks, led by the Pope and bishops, turn away, holding blindly on by each other towards a gulf, into which Aristotle (representing, of course, the Schoolmen) is falling. Truly, here was the Reformation.

The next work of Holbein's, which we have to consider, and the one with which his name is most inseparably connected, is the celebrated '*Dance of Death*,' to understand the origin and motive of which strange '*morality*,' we must look back to the middle ages.

We know that the idea of bringing the image or thought of death, at certain times, before the eyes and minds of the living, is one which has prevailed in all ages and countries which have possessed a national religion. The Egyptians at their banquets, the Romans in their triumphs, ever preserved some solemn remembrance of death. No need indeed was there for early Christendom to remind of a bondage swallowed up in victory ; nor any, through the ages when men would worship day by day where their fathers lay beneath, and where the still figures above, seemed to pray with them smiling, as the light played over their quiet faces. No need for harsh reminder of death, when men would enshrine their ‘ holy field ’ within lovely marble cloister, and lavish all priceless human labour on its walls, that they might pass to and fro therein as in a picture-gallery ; or when princely families could, like the Scaglieri, “ bear daily to behold from their palace chambers the places where their fathers lay at rest, at the meeting of the dark streets of Verona.”

But the reign of the Renaissance has come, with all the darkened faith and hope which it expresses ; and the paganised splendour of its monuments tells us alike of the fear of annihilation, and of the dread of immortality without its hope ; and men will try to

put out of sight, as far as may be, all reminders of the king of terrors.

As early as the thirteenth century, a French poem appeared, entitled '*Les Trois Morts et les Trois Vifs*,' which gradually became popularised throughout Europe by painting and sculpture. Orcagna represented the original legend in his great picture of the '*Triumph of Death*,' in one corner of which, three young men, going a hawking, are met by S. Macarius the Anchorite, who points to three open graves, in which are three dead bodies in different stages of decay. It seems most probable that the name of the '*Danse Macabre*' took its origin from this story, although several other derivations are suggested. In Germany and England, representations of this kind were very common. Not many years ago, there existed in a chapel at Bewdley, near Bristol, a window, on which were painted three shrouded figures, with the inscription beneath—

“ Such as ye bin so weare wee ;
Such as we bin shall ye bee ;
Take ye which of us three.”

Again, in an illumination of a MS. of about 1300,*

* MS. Arundel 83, British Museum. See Professor Ruskin's '*Lectures on Architecture and Painting*,' lecture iv. p. 209.

three queens are met by three dead persons. The former say—

“ ‘ Ich am aferd.’
 ‘ Lo whet ich se?’
 ‘ Me thinketh hit be develes thre.’ ”

And the dead answer—

“ ‘ Ich wes wel fair.’
 ‘ Such schelt ou be.’
 ‘ For Godes sake be wer by me.’ ”

And Dürer represented the subject of the three horsemen fighting with three skeletons, in one of his early engravings. We have no means of knowing when and where the strange and weird Dance of Death, performed by living persons, took its origin. It was, no doubt, like the miracle-plays of the middle ages, originally instituted for the purpose of conveying a moral and spiritual lesson to the people, and was from thence gradually adopted as a subject for painting. Towards the close of the middle ages, it was a favourite subject in Northern Europe; and on the walls of cloisters, churches, and bridges, the lesson of mortality was perpetually enforced. “In many churches of France,” says Warton,* “there was an ancient show or mimicry, in which all ranks of persons were personated by the ecclesiastics, who all

* ‘English Poetry,’ vol. ii. p. 43, note *h*.

danced together, and disappeared one after another." The earliest known pictorial representation, was in the churchyard of the Innocents at Paris, executed in 1434. Lydgate, the English poet, who flourished about 1430, translated from the French, the verses of the 'Dance of Death,' which were under the painting in the Innocents Churchyard, for inscription in S. Paul's Churchyard, where there was a representation of the subject. Warton's assertion, that these verses were composed "by one Macaber in German rhymes,"* appears to rest on no foundation; and it seems most probable that, as suggested by Douce,† the name of the above-mentioned hermit, Macarius or Macaire, corrupted into Macabre, was the origin of the title. In the Hungerfield Chapel at Salisbury, destroyed in the barbarous restoration of modern times, were remains of an ancient Dance of Death; and Stowe records that such a painting existed before the fire, in the cloister of S. Paul's Churchyard, "painted costly and cunningly." The Dominican convents were specially famous for paintings of this subject; and it was the famous Dance of Death in the cloister of the Basle monastery, de-

* Ibid. p. 364.

† 'Holbein's Dance of Death and Bible Cuts,' by Douce, Bohn's ed. chap. iii. p. 29.

stroyed in 1806, and long supposed to be Holbein's, which inspired the idea, and furnished the mottoes for his pictures. A charnel-house is the usual scene for the ghastly representation, each mortal who comes to join the dread procession being led by a skeleton. The moral teaching of this subject seems gradually, as the middle ages wore on, to have passed into bitter irony against the tyranny which could only be levelled in death. There is no irony in the teaching of Dante or of the great mediæval artists; nor does Orcagna see anything to jest about in sin, and death, and judgment, though he too knows that the last come most sternly to faithless rulers; but Holbein's engravings are characterised chiefly by morbid satisfaction in the equality of death, and its triumph over the tyranny of the strong. Yet Orcagna can face the more awful doctrine of everlasting punishment, from which Holbein in his half-defiant mood shrinks and turns away. "All is vanity," says Holbein; "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave." But he dares not carry his lesson home as Giotto and Orcagna have done, and add, "Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Holbein's celebrated woodcuts are, in fact, misnamed the 'Dance of Death,' being separate pictures,

each one of which tells its graphic story, and bears its own stern moral.* Introductory to the series are the Fall of Man and Expulsion from Paradise. Then comes a general assemblage of 'Deaths' in a charnel-house, summoning mortals to join them, by trumpets and other instruments. The series opens with the crowning of an emperor by the Pope, over whose shoulder grins a skeleton; while another mimics the cardinal, behind whom he stands. In the next, the emperor hears a cause, while Death snatches the crown from his head. The king sits at his banquet, Death pouring out his last draught. The cardinal's hat is wrenched off as he gives a letter of indulgence. "Woe unto them which justify the wicked for reward," moralises Holbein. Death meets the empress in her royal state, and points to an open grave. The queen is dragged away by a mocking skeleton, arrayed in a fool's cap and bell. More gently Death seizes the aged bishop from among his flock, the setting sun indicating his finished work. The duke is seized by the ermine; the soldier, as he lifts his sword to strike; the canon, as he passes into his cathedral;

* A set, complete with the exception of the 'Astrologer,' is in the British Museum.

the judge, receiving a bribe ; the lawyer, taking the pay of his wealthy client ; the magistrate, as he turns away from the poor pleader ; the preacher * is seized as he demonstrates to an admiring audience. The parish priest is accompanied by Death, ringing the passing-bell, as he goes to minister to the dying. But he is taken quietly in the midst of his duties ; while the friar, in the next place, is mercilessly seized by the hood, and dragged away. A nun kneels before an altar, not praying, but looking back at her lover ; and Death extinguishes the candles. Two skeletons, one dancing and playing in front, the other crowned with leaves and helping her on, accompany a tottering old woman to her grave. " Better is death than life," says Holbein. An old man is led by Death into the physician's room. The astrologer is interrupted in his calculations by a skull held before him. The miser is seized as he counts his money ; the merchant, as he safely lands his bales. Death breaks the mast of a storm-tossed ship ; runs the knight

* It is asserted both by Douce and Woltmann that Death is holding a jaw-bone over the preacher's head. Professor Ruskin, however, drew my attention to the shape of the so-called jaw-bone, expressing his opinion that it could not, from its size, be anything of the kind, and suggesting that it might be a scroll.

through the body ; mocks at the noble, clad in the dress of the despised peasant ; interrupts the gamblers, accompanied by the Devil ; leads the old man to an open grave, playing as he goes, on the dulcimer. A skeleton clasps a necklace of bones on the fine lady as she arrays herself. The bride and bridegroom are met by Death with his mocking tambourine. "Naught but death shall part thee and me," is the bitter moral. The pedlar is seized on his road, vainly trying to escape ; the husbandman, ploughing his last field as the sun goes down ; the little child is taken wailing from his mother. The drunkards are surprised at their revel ; the fool wiled away by Death's bag-pipes. The robber, the blind man, and the beggar, complete the series. At the end is a picture called the Last Judgment, though indeed it only represents a few of the saved, standing, just risen from their graves, before the Lord.*

Of this period—about 1522—is probably one of Holbein's most beautiful pictures, the Meier Madonna,†

* Engravings of the complete series, with much interesting information on the subject, are to be found in 'Holbein's Dance of Death and Bible Cuts,' before referred to. A beautiful edition of the 'Icones Veteris Testamenti,' or the 'Bible Cuts,' now very rare, was published by Pickering in 1830.

† It has been engraved by the Arundel Society.

which is in one of the royal apartments at Darmstadt. The Dresden picture of this subject, which hangs next to the Madonna San Sisto, is now, we believe, acknowledged to be a copy.

The last great order which Holbein received at Basle, was that for the painting of the council-room of the town-hall. These cartoons have long since fallen off from decay and neglect, though the sketches of them are preserved at Basle. Begun in 1521, the troubles of the Reformation and of the terrible Peasants' War stopped the progress of the painting after Holbein had worked for a year at it, and he left it unfinished when he went to England. He completed the work on his visit to Basle in 1529.

By the end of the year 1526 the work of spoliation and sacrilege was well-nigh completed in Northern Germany. "The egg" which Erasmus had laid, had been, as he bitterly said, "hatched into a very different sort of bird." Luther's words of moderation, his earnestly expressed "wish that he could persuade lords and gentlemen to have the whole Bible painted inside and outside their houses," fell unheeded in the midst of the fury of the whirlwind he was reaping from the wind which his hands had sown. Dürer's eloquent defence of the use of paintings and statues for devotional purposes, was scarcely known beyond

the walls of the quiet old city where his life was now ebbing away. The revolutionary mob, arising against the bondage of the empire, espoused a religious cause, of which the watchword was freedom from authority; and the Anabaptists sowed broadcast the seeds of revolt against all constituted law. For three years the authorities of Basle strove for peace. Some of the churches were given up to the Reformed faith, and all, of whatever creed, were exhorted to leave one another unmolested in the performance of their respective religious observances. But at last the mob gathered its strength; and on Shrove Tuesday, in the year 1529, swept through the city, carrying havoc and destruction with it, making bonfires of all the works of art which they could find, till scarcely a wreck remained to the German Church of all the treasures of mediæval sculpture and painting.

Long ere this final catastrophe, however, Holbein had left Basle, starved out by the Reformation, and perhaps panic-stricken at the plague which raged there in 1526. It was probably chiefly owing to Erasmus that he made up his mind to come to England. He, at any rate, gave Holbein all the letters of introduction to which he owed his first success in England, and all his early portraits in this country

were those of Erasmus's friends. Into that house at Chelsea, which Erasmus called the "school of Christian feeling, where no dispute, no unbecoming word is heard, none was seen idle," Holbein was warmly received for his own and his friend's sake ; and it speaks well for the integrity of his life, that he was so received, in such a house, the like of which could hardly have been found in Europe.

From henceforth we know Holbein only as the great portrait-painter of the North ; and it is to him that we owe nearly all the great likenesses which have come down to us of the knights, and nobles, and churchmen, and ladies, of that golden age of England's aristocracy. His greatest picture in England, that of the More family, containing life-size portraits of Sir Thomas, his father, wife, and children, with the name and age of each beneath, is lost. The painting at Cokethorpe Park, claimed as the original by the owner, Mr. Strickland, is a work executed after his death, "made up," says Mr. Wornum, "from the original composition." The other great picture, belonging to Mr. Winn,* and which bore Holbein's name at the Kensington Portrait Exhibition (1866), has no resemblance to Holbein's touch or style of

* For fuller information on these pictures, see Wornum's 'Life of Holbein,' chap. xii. p. 231.

workmanship. Waagen called it a "good old copy." Holbein took his sketch of the picture back to Germany with him afterwards, as a present to Erasmus; and it was this to which Erasmus alluded so warmly in his well-known letter to Margaret Roper, and which is now in Basle Museum.

Returning home in the sad year 1529, he came to Basle, only to find desolation and vacant places in his once pleasant home. Most of his own paintings were probably destroyed by the Iconoclasts, with all other works of art within their reach. Froben—well for him, perhaps—was dead; Erasmus gone to seek a quieter refuge for his old age. The council had decided that, "God having forbidden images, and cursed the makers, they would set up no more pictures;" and so Holbein, after finishing the town-hall pictures, left in 1532, not perhaps so regretfully this time as before, his native country, to settle in the land which had received him so hospitably. In England, too, the time of his absence had worked changes: good old Archbishop Warham, one of his patrons, was near his death; More and his friends were out of favour; and henceforth his work lay chiefly among the wealthy merchants who were connected with Germany, of whom many portraits by him remain. He was made court-painter to

Henry VIII. about 1536—an office which, though doubtless valuable in the reputation which it gave to his name in England, usually involved sad waste of genius, since it included the superintendence of all the painting required in the palace, high and low. As, however, the ordinary ‘sergeant painter,’ as the king’s painter was called, was one Andrew Wright, Holbein probably occupied a superior position, and was chiefly employed with painting portraits, great and small, the collection of which became at that period as great a fashion as, in our own day, that of photographs; sketch-books being frequently kept by wealthy persons for this purpose. Many portraits remain by Holbein, drawn while he was court-painter, among the Windsor sketches. Of this period also is supposed to be the picture of the Queen of Sheba before Solomon, also at Windsor. His chief work done for Henry, in Whitehall Palace, of which there is a small copy at Hampton Court, was destroyed by fire in 1698. It was in 1535 that he executed the well-known illustrations in the first complete English Bible—that of Miles Coverdale, a copy of which is in the British Museum—in the title-page of which Henry appears as the head of the Church, giving the Bible to kneeling bishops.

In 1538, we find him again at Basle, having been sent abroad by the king on business, and taking that

opportunity to revisit his old home ; but he did not remain many weeks. He obtained leave to return to England for two years more, in consideration of the "high character of his art," and of the requisition of his services by the King of England. His wife was to have forty florins a year until his return, after which he was to be granted a pension of fifty florins.

But from this last visit to England, Holbein never returned. Of the remainder of his life there, we know little or nothing ; he seems to have been always poor, and generally in advance of his payments, notwithstanding the money he had received for his numerous portraits, and for his work from the King. He probably lived the same careless convivial life which our general knowledge of his character leads us to conjecture that he spent at Basle. He liked good living, kept his horse, dressed handsomely, and saved no money, leaving but little to pay his debts, and a small sum for his two children "out at nurse," of whose mother we know nothing. He died of the plague in London, in 1543 ; and thus Death—the grim Fate which he had portrayed in all its numerous appearances to mankind—came to him also, swiftly and suddenly. Let us trust that his own continual moralising had taught him the meet "conclusion of the whole matter ;" that, as in his half-tender thought of the

husbandman snatched from his plough, the setting sun shone gently over his chequered life at the last, and that at evening tide there was light for him.

The scope and limits of these chapters do not permit of our dwelling on the greatest branch of Holbein's work—his portrait-painting; and indeed, the foundation by him, of the Northern school of portrait-painting belongs rather to the history of modern art. We will therefore close this chapter with a recommendation to our readers to refer to an article by Professor Ruskin on Holbein and Reynolds, as the two great portrait-painters of England. Compared to Holbein, he says, Reynolds' best work is but "magnificent sketching," addressing itself to common thought and casual observers, "eager to arrest the passer-by, but careless to detain him, or detaining him, if at all, by an unexplained enchantment, not by continuance of teaching, or development of idea." * Holbein, on the other hand, paints the man himself, neither attitudinised nor idealised, taking us back through the centuries, to see just what he saw himself, of power or of goodness, or of intellect, or of beauty. It is, indeed, in his portrait-painting chiefly that we see his real greatness; because there he painted with all his soul, concentrated all his power; there he worked with

* 'Cornhill Magazine,' March 1860.

"the calm entireness of unaffected resolution which sacrifices nothing, forgets nothing, and fears nothing."

WORKS BY HOLBEIN IN BRITISH GALLERIES.

National Gallery Portrait of a lady.

Windsor Castle 1. Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. 2. Sir Henry Guildford. 3. A young man. 4. Dr. Stokesley, Bishop of London. 5. A man. 6. Edward VI. 7. Henry VIII. 8. Two volumes of portrait sketches. 9. A framed collection of portrait sketches.

British Museum 1. A small set of designs. 2. A set of the Passion cuts.

Hampton Court 1. Lady Vaux. 2. The battle of Pavia. 3. Henry VIII.'s jester. 4. A man and woman. 5. Sir Henry Guildford. 6. Erasmus. 7. Froben. 8. His own portrait. 9 Erasmus writing. 10. Henry VIII. on his throne, with Jane Seymour, the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, and Edward VI.

Liverpool Institute 1. Margaret of Valois. 2. The Prodigal Son.

Worcester College, Oxford . . A collection of pen and ink sketches

Burleigh House 1. Henry VIII. 2. Edward VI.

Late Lord Northwick 1. John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. 2. Miniature portrait.

- Warwick Castle* Henry VIII.
Lowther Castle Portrait of a woman.
Castle Howard 1. Henry VIII. 2. Duke of Norfolk.
Wentworth Castle Æcolampadius.
Chatsworth The Wheel of Fortune. A small set of drawings.
Duke of Rutland Henry VIII.
Belvoir Castle A portrait.
Clumber Park Two portraits.
Broughton Hall Sir Nicholas Carew.
Sion House 1. Edward VI. 2. Duke of Somerset.
Arundel Castle 1. Howard, Duke of Norfolk. 2. Christina, Duchess of Milan.
Alton Towers Portrait.
Ince Hall Sir Thomas More.
Luton House King James of Scotland and his wife.
Lord Yarborough 1. Edward VI. 2. Henry VIII.
Knowle Park Henry VIII.
Glendon Hall Katherine Parr.
Althorp Henry VIII.
Ketteringham Hall Anne Boleyn.
Mr. Baring Johann Herbster.
Osterley Park Sir Thomas Gresham.
Blenheim Head of a man.
Petworth 1. Female figure. 2. Edward VI. 3. Henry VIII. 4. Man with falcon. 5. Man with letter.
Longford Castle 1. Erasmus. 2. Peter Ægidius. 3. Portrait. 4. Luther. 5. Anthony Derry, chamberlain to Henry VIII. 6. Æcolampadius. 7. Edward VI.
Charleton Park Katherine Howard.
Serlby Henry VIII.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RENAISSANCE AND SAVONAROLA.

	Born.	Died.		Born.	Died.
Luca della Robbia ..	1400	{ Circa 1481	Fra Bartolommeo	1468	1517
Cosimo Rosselli	1416	1484	Cronaca	1455	1509
Luca Signorelli	1439	1521	Francia .. { Circa 1450 }		1518
Verocchio ..	1432	1488	Pinturicchio ..	1454	1513
Perugino	1446	1524	Lorenzo di Credi	1459	1537
Ghirlandajo ..	1449	1498			

TURNING to Italy once more, and taking the year 1450, that of the great Jubilee, for a landmark, we will glance over the conditions of art there in the latter part of the fifteenth century, and the influences which were gathering around it.

All hope of Reformation in Italy had passed away with the Council of Basle (1431-1449). The urgent appeal of all the best members of that council, for a reform of morals and discipline, their protest against the autocracy of the Pope, their testimony in favour of the marriage of the clergy—all the last warning

utterances of the last Œcumenical Council of the Catholic Church—had been drowned in the clamours of the Papal party.

Nicholas V. (1447-1455) staved off the degradation of the Church for a space. The "poor student of Sarzana," elected as by momentary inspiration from amidst his brilliant and ambitious colleagues, restored to the Papal throne, by the simple force of his high moral and intellectual qualities, the respect and admiration of Europe. The Jubilee of 1450 was, outwardly at least, as splendid a success as the memorable one of 1300. Strangers crowded from all countries to do honour to the new Pope; gold poured into his coffers, and a prestige more valuable than gold was restored to the Papacy.

With Nicholas V. the age of the Renaissance begins. It was his noble ambition to make Rome the centre of literature and art; to gather around him all the culture and scholarship of the age, and consecrate them to the service of the Church.* An accomplished scholar, devoted from early life to literature, regardless of money except for the purpose of accumulating books, he now only accepted splendour of position and boundlessness of wealth, to

* 'Latin Christianity,' vol. viii. book xiii. chap. xvii. p. 469.

spend them again in the highest interests of the Apostolic See. As the Turks gradually swept over Eastern Christendom, and neared Constantinople, scholars and artists flocked to Italy from the doomed city, and there found a friendly shelter in the court of Nicholas V. The literature of ancient Greece became familiar in Rome, and the hitherto unknown Fathers of the Eastern Church were first made familiar, by translations, to the Latin world. Each branch of letters had its own expositors, chosen from the most learned of European scholars; the Vatican Library was founded with a gift of five thousand volumes. So Nicholas V. sought to inaugurate a new era of universal enlightenment, in which the Church was to take her legitimate place as guide and teacher, and thus to secure the future triumph of Christianity over the intellect of mankind. A splendid idea; but one which came too late to save the unity of the Latin Church, and which had for its result, but the hastening of the trans-Alpine Reformation, by the progress of independent thought. Had this great intellectual era been preceded by a thorough reformation of morals in the Roman court, what a glorious future might even then have been in store for a re-united Christendom!

No less enthusiastic in the revival of art than of

letters, Nicholas set himself to restore the ancient churches of Rome, which had been allowed by his predecessors to fall into decay, and more than forty churches were either partially rebuilt or restored; his princely munificence extending to districts far beyond the Papal city.* It was he who first conceived the idea of rebuilding the Basilica of S. Peter with a splendour which should be worthy of the Cathedral of Christendom. The Vatican Palace, begun by Pope Symmachus as long ago as the beginning of the sixth century, was now to be made as magnificent as wealth and genius could ensure; and the Pope's biographer, Manetti, has described the plans which were to restore to Rome her imperial splendour, and rival the palaces of the Cæsars. As Jerusalem clustered around the Temple, so should Rome, thought Nicholas, surround the Vatican.† Halls and saloons, state rooms for sovereign guests, a vast theatre for the Pope's coronation, surrounding palaces for the cardinals, gardens laid out with works of art, were all to appear in corresponding splendour in this, the new Capitol of Rome, enclosing the whole of the Vatican Hill.‡ Brunelleschi had died before

* 'De l'Art Chrétien,' vol. ii. chap. vi. p. 22.

† Ibid. p. 23.

‡ 'Latin Christianity,' vol. viii. bk. xiii. chap. xvii. p. 475. Also Roscoe's 'Leo the Tenth,' vol. ii. chap. xxii. p. 393.

the accession of Nicholas ; but a worthy successor had arisen in his fellow-townsmen, the accomplished Alberti, whose architectural genius, rising above his other high talents, marked him for the splendid commission. He was one of those wonderfully gifted men of whom this age seems to have produced a greater number than any previous one. Savant, artist, poet, architect, engineer, he has yet passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind him of his brilliant life. He wrote Latin as his mother tongue, it is said ; was devoted to all kinds of literature ; familiar with physical, mechanical, and mathematical sciences ; and was the author of a famous treatise on architecture.* He built the façade of S. Maria Novella, the Rucellai palace, and S. Francis at Rimini. The only part of the vast plans of the Vatican, which he really accomplished, was the library and the little chapel, to paint which Fra Angelico was summoned to Rome. Happily too small and unpretending to be destroyed by the vandalism which later Popes exercised on the remains of mediæval art, in order to make room for their own projects, it remains untouched to this day ; its frescoed walls filled with some of the happiest, as they

* 'De l'Art Chrétien,' vol. ii. chap. vi. p. 27.

were the last inspirations, of the monk-artist of Fiesole.

Eight years ended the reign of the great and good Nicholas V., his death having been hastened, it is said, by sorrow for the disgraceful loss to Christendom of the Eastern capital. His dying words were, that neither for ambition, nor vainglory, nor desire of immortalising his name, had he undertaken his great works in Rome ; but for the increase of the power of the Church, and the dignity of the Apostolic See.*

Sixtus IV. was the next great patron of art. The approaching Jubilee, that periodical incentive to the Popes to exhibit the Papal city in the greatest possible magnificence, induced Sixtus to hasten on the works of restoration ; and, under his auspices, the work of restoring the ancient Basilicas went on with renewed vigour. It was now that the great reaction in favour of pagan art set in. On the instance of the King of Naples, who visited Rome at the Jubilee, the Pope commissioned officers to clear from the streets of Rome, the hovels and other unsightly buildings which, in the increase of population, had gradually gathered round the ancient parts of the city, and concealed its beauties. In the course

* *Ibid.* p. 21.

of their work, the officers employed, discovered that marble columns, pieces of serpentine, porphyry, and other precious stones had been taken by the people, from time to time, to assist in building their own houses ; and severe prohibitions were issued against the removal of any more ancient remains. The Pope also rescued the celebrated statue of Marcus Aurelius, and replaced it on its pedestal, on the Capitoline Hill, amidst the enthusiasm of the Roman people. Their pride and patriotism were aroused at this reminiscence of the ancient greatness of Rome ; and henceforth the tide of popular feeling joined with the more refined paganism of the upper classes, and set rapidly towards the substitution of pagan for Christian art. The least fragments of antiquity were carefully searched for, and treasured, and proprietors of land in the neighbourhood of Rome became objects of envy, not for the wealth which it brought them, but for the possible art treasures it might contain. So great was the sensation produced on one occasion, by the discovery of the embalmed body of a beautiful Roman maiden, that the Pope had the body secretly buried, in fear that a kind of worship should be offered to it. To such an extent did this passion for the monuments of pagan Rome spread, that it was reported, with great probability of truth, that many persons had secretly

returned to the pagan faith, changing their Christian names for classic ones ; some openly professed an Epicurean philosophy, and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was disputed in public.

It is in the famous Sistine Chapel, and in the immortal names of the artists summoned to paint there, that Sixtus IV. has made for himself a lasting remembrance in art-history. Sandro Botticelli superintended the works, assisted by Perugino. The former painted the life of Moses, beginning with the slaying of the Egyptian, Perugino having executed the two opening scenes ; then the punishment of Korah, with Renaissance architecture in the background ; and lastly the Temptation of Christ. Cosimo Rosselli continued the history of the Mosaic dispensation in the Passage of the Red Sea, the Delivery of the Law on Mount Sinai, the anger of Moses, and punishment of the Israelites for idolatry. He also painted the Sermon on the Mount, and the Last Supper—a painfully inadequate conception of that sacred subject. Ghirlandajo carried on the Gospel history in the Calling of S. Peter and S. Andrew, S. James, and S. John, and the Resurrection ; which last, however, has been so repainted as to be no longer a genuine work. Luca Signorelli also continued the series illustrative of the history of Israel down to the Death of Moses,

in which, strangely enough, the Israelites are represented as mourning over his body, in disregard to the mysterious story of the Bible. Perugino painted, irrespective of the disputed frescoes of the life of Moses, the Baptism of Christ, and the Delivery of the Keys to S. Peter; and the great altar-piece of the Assumption, his favourite subject, and probably the master-piece of his prime, destroyed, alas! to make room for Michael Angelo's painful and distorted conception of the Last Judgment.

The work which we have seen Nicholas V. doing in Rome, in the middle of the fifteenth century, for art and literature, Cosmo de' Medici had begun, years before, in Florence. It was Cosmo who had given a home to the poor Thomas of Sarzana, and in his brilliant little court that the future Pope first conceived the great ideas which his after-life and fortune were spent in endeavouring to realise. Never had the city been so wealthy, and so prosperous in commerce, as during the lifetime of the best of the talented and unscrupulous Medici family. His splendid fortune was lavished equally on works of art and works of charity; expended as lavishly in pensions to scholars and artists, and gifts and loans to all who were in need, as in the building of churches and hospitals; so that at his death it was found that

nearly all the principal citizens of Florence were in his debt. He was wont to say that he "had never been able to lay out so much in the service of God as to find the balance in his own favour."*

To the Council of Florence, held in 1439, among the learned Greeks sent to represent the Eastern Church, came one whose learning and writings had gained him the reputation of being equal to the philosophers of ancient Greece—Georgius Gemisthus, known in the Western world as Pletho, from his unbounded reverence for Plato and his philosophy. This celebrated man first inspired Cosmo de' Medici with that enthusiasm for Greek literature which resulted in the great revival of letters that marked the latter half of the fifteenth century, and for the encouragement of which Cosmo attracted scholars from all parts of Europe by his munificent patronage. To reconcile the philosophy of the ancient world with the philosophy of Christianity, Plato with the Fathers; to raise mankind from the sphere of unreasoning belief into that of thought; to reform Catholicism by means of the intellect—was the great idea of the latter half of the fifteenth century. Wearied with the hair-splitting definitions and innumerable fables

* Machiavelli, Bohn's ed. book vii. chap. i. p. 313.

with which the Schoolmen had overlaid the Catholic system, and alienated the intellect of the age, the best of the Platonic philosophers sought to open an era of intellectual life which should raise mankind from the slavery which the Papal system had wound around it.* What might not the Catholic Church achieve, purged from the spirit of bigotry and falsehood, and endowed with the resources which the intellect of the age could secure? so thought two of the master minds of that age—Cosmo de' Medici and Nicholas V. Yet, supported as the great idea was by almost boundless wealth and power, it failed inevitably; and the extension of a culture which had purified and elevated a few noble minds, to a generation already sunk deeply in moral depravity, had but for its result the opening of the floodgates of pagan immorality, and the extinction of Christianity.

It was not until Lorenzo the Magnificent succeeded to the government of Florence (1469) that the wave of paganism swept unrestrained over the city. Profligate and unscrupulous, Lorenzo sought to blind the Florentines to the political and financial ruin which he was bringing on them, by providing constant amusements and diversions, and by indulging, to the

* Maurice's 'Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy' (Modern), ch. iii. p. 69

utmost of his power, the growing passion for the art and culture of ancient Greece. He laid out the celebrated gardens of S. Mark's with treasures of ancient sculpture and statuary, and threw them open to the people. Here all the young artists of the age came to study the forms of classic art; and in these almost sacred groves of heathen deities, the inspirations of Christian art were forgotten, and men learned to think scorn of the dignity and purity of the draped sculpture of the Christian schools. Poets, artists, philosophers, flocked to the far-famed court of Lorenzo, and received welcome and patronage from him. Dividing his time between state duties, intellectual exercises, and immoral amusements, this extraordinary man found time to discuss religious questions at the Platonic Academy, converse with artists at home, write poetry, and transact the business of the state; ending the day in the society of the profligate young noblemen of the city, who, disguised as devils, sang through the streets, at night, songs and ballads composed by him, which were, says Villari, "an outrage on public decency." The example of Lorenzo had, as might be expected, corrupted the morality of the entire city: immorality had brought irreligion with it, and scepticism had spread over the cultivated classes of Florence. Plato

was discussed in the monasteries, and the Bible eschewed, for fear, as Cardinal Bembo said, such a barbarous style of Latin should corrupt taste; S. Paul's Epistles were regarded as "old wives' fables, unworthy of men of grave habits."*

Such were the conditions of Florentine life, when the brilliant and accomplished Pico della Mirandola came to settle there. The delight of the philosophers of Italy, the beloved of all men, for his grace, and beauty, and gentleness—without seeing whose sweet face once more, Lorenzo said he could not die happy—this man brought to Florence her great reformer; pleading with Lorenzo, till at length he consented, that Savonarola should be installed in the convent of S. Mark's. There, under a damask rose-tree, preserved or renewed ever after in loving memory, those wonderful sermons were begun, which so thrilled through the heart of Florence, and which Savonarola was obliged to adjourn first to S. Mark's Church, and then to the Cathedral. And the gifted young nobleman who had well-nigh exhausted the wisdom and the learning of his age, listened day after day, till, hearing with an honest and good heart,

* Villari's 'History of Savonarola' (Horner's translation), vol. i. bk. i. chap. v. p. 71.

it was given him to know that true Philosophy is in the pursuit of the highest Wisdom, and the end of Theology the knowledge of God.* He spent the rest of his short and brilliant life in furthering the interests of the Christian faith, and was buried in the cloister of S. Mark's, in the dress of the Order and under the shadow of the Church to which he owed his conversion—the first-fruits of Savonarola's work in Florence.

Of that work, which has made his name immortal, and numbered him among the martyrs, it is not our place here to tell. How he gathered up all of purity and goodness that was left in Florence, inspiring it to one great effort for the salvation of the city; how he trained eight thousand of the children to form, as he hoped, a new and better republic in the times to come—all this belongs to the pages of history. It is only with one side of his character and work that we have to do; his exquisite perception of beauty, and the influence which it exercised on that artistic race. There is no quality of soul so powerfully attractive to mankind, as a fine sense of beauty, spiritualised by religion, and combined, as it so rarely is, with a high order of

* Maurice's 'Philosophy,' chap. iii. p. 78.

intellect. We can well imagine, then, the secret of the fascination which Savonarola exercised over the highly cultivated people of Florence, and especially of his influence over the artists of his age. They who, from amidst the artificial life and sensuous excitements of the luxurious city, wandered into the fields where the children of Savonarola's flock were weaving garlands of the white olive-blossom for the churches, chanting the while, the sweet hymns he had taught them, as they sat in groups on the grass, said that it seemed to them as though they had been in Paradise.* Those who heard the spiritual teaching which fell from his lips as he walked with the brethren of S. Mark's among the beautiful hills and groves of Val d'Arno ; or as, seated among them, he would knead the white pith of the fig-tree into doves, telling his followers, as he distributed them, of the mystic bird of the old and new creations, thought, as they listened entranced, that he must be inspired.

Again and again did Savonarola address himself, in his sermons, to the artists of Florence. He hoped that the purification of artistic taste might be, among such an art-loving race, the harbinger of a purification of morals and religion ; that he might

* 'De l'Art Chrétien,' vol. ii. chap. xii.

inspire some few lofty souls with such a desire for the beauty of holiness, and enthusiasm for the majesty of Christian art, as would prove a powerful antagonist to the pagan schools. He demanded, first, of all, from those enrolled among his disciples, the sacrifice of all works of art which could offend modesty, or sully purity of thought. The great Bonfire of Vanities * has helped to obliterate traces of the immorality which had overspread the art of that age ; but we may form some idea of its licence, from Savonarola's sermons. "Young men," he said on one occasion, "go about saying, 'She is a very Magdalene,' or, 'He is a true S. John,' or, 'She is an image of the Virgin ;' and then ye place their portraits in our churches, to the great scandal of Divine things. In this, ye painters, ye do much mischief ; and if ye knew as well as I do, how great the mischief were, ye would not be guilty of it." † "You represent the Virgin Mary clothed as a whore," was the stern reproof of another sermon ; "I tell you that she went about clothed modestly as a poor maiden." Well might Savonarola say this, when the

* It seems probable that this bonfire was much exaggerated by historians, and that the works of art consumed in it were chiefly immoral paintings and books. See Perkins' *'Tuscan Sculptors,'* vol. i. bk. iv. ch. viii. p. 238.

† Villari, vol. ii. bk. iii. p. 143.

head of the Church was causing Pinturicchio to paint an Adoration of the Magi, with Julia Farnese for the blessed Virgin, and himself kneeling before her ! "Your ideas," he went on, "are clothed with the grossest materialism. . . . The more creatures participate in, and approach to, the beauty of God, the more beautiful they are ; even as the beauty of the body is in proportion to the beauty of the soul. For if you took two women of this congregation, equally beautiful in body, it would be the holiest one who would excite among the spectators the most admiration, and the palm would not fail to be awarded to her, even by sensual men."* The chord which Savonarola thus touched, vibrated in the hearts of the best of the Florentine artists ; so that the greater number of those who in that generation won for themselves lasting fame in art, are known to us as the followers of Savonarola.

Ghirlandajo, 'the garland-maker,'† goldsmith by inheritance, education, and name, is perhaps the least of the celebrated artists of that great age of painting. His pictures were always laboriously worked and exquisitely finished, but are somewhat

* 'De l'Art Chrétien,' vol. ii. chap. xii. p. 433.

† So called from the skill which he and his father had in the making of a kind of silver coronet worn by the Florentine girls.

wearisome in their quaint affectations of dress, ornament, and manner, and are wanting in depth of thought and feeling. One of the chief characteristics of Ghirlandajo's pictures was the representation, in the costume of his age and country, of the characters he introduced; he excelled also in the composition and arrangement of architectural and landscape backgrounds. His earliest remaining fresco, bearing the date of 1480, is in the Church of the Ognissanti at Florence, one of the few remains of the series of pictures once painted there. Ghirlandajo went to Rome in 1482, and painted in the Sistine Chapel his finest work, the Calling of S. Peter and S. Andrew, and soon afterwards, on his return to Florence, executed the frescoes in the Sassetti Chapel of S. Trinità, the altar-piece of which is in the Academy, representing his favourite subject, the Adoration of the Magi. About 1488, Ghirlandajo received the commission to re-paint the damaged frescoes of Orcagna in S. Maria Novella, and in the same year the young Michael Angelo became his pupil, and painted there some of the figures which, among the many interesting portraits by Ghirlandajo of his Florentine contemporaries, are pointed out still, as the early efforts of his young pupil. Had Ghirlandajo lived in an earlier age, he would probably have made himself

more famous as a mosaicist than, in such an era of great artists as that on which we are dwelling, he was capable of doing as a fresco-painter. All his sympathies and inclinations turned towards the minor accessories of painting, in which his goldsmith's training had so perfected his skill; and all branches of decorative art were his delight. "Painting," he was wont to say, "is fleeting; but mosaic eternal." How far Ghirlandajo came under the influence of Savonarola, we do not know; but his little son Ridolfo, afterwards a painter himself, was one of the band of Florentine children trained by Savonarola; and it is said that Ghirlandajo always cherished a special reverence for the order from which his name, *Domenico*, was derived.

Pinturicchio, whose real name was Bernadino Betti, was an Umbrian artist, reflecting all the characteristics of that school; its devotional meditateness, attachment to early ideal types, and its love of bright ornament and gold. A Madonna of his, in Sir Anthony Stirling's collection, is very interesting, as a rare specimen of his earliest style. He went to work in the Sistine Chapel as Perugino's assistant, and while there, made a connection with the Cardinal della Rovere, which enabled him to work independently in Rome after the other painters had departed; and

for this patron he painted several chapels in S. Maria del Popolo. It is scarcely perhaps to Pinturicchio's credit that he was so greatly favoured and patronised by the infamous Borgias ; and in fact the imputation of avarice and undue desire of gain has rested on his name, although it is probable that Vasari made the most of whatever traditions there may have been on the matter. He left a greater quantity of work behind him than any contemporary artist ; but this has no more added to his credit than did the same fact afterwards to Raffaelle's ; since he was forced, by the number of commissions he undertook, to employ assistants to fill in a great part of his pictures. Among his other works, Pinturicchio painted the whole suite in the Vatican called the Appartamento Borgia, for Alexander VI. ; in the second room of which, is the Madonna said to have been a portrait of Julia Farnese. Between 1501 and 1503 he executed the paintings in the Library at Siena, which are even more famous, as having been the scene of Raffaelle's early labours,* than for Pinturicchio's own work. The Cardinal Piccolomini, nephew of Pius II., and afterwards Pope him-

* Raffaelle was commissioned by Pinturicchio to prepare designs for a part of this work.

self, had built a library at Siena to receive the books bequeathed by his uncle, and now he desired to commemorate him still further, by causing the walls to be painted with the history of that Pope's eventful life. Pinturicchio ended his days at Siena in 1513.

We must briefly mention here the name of the great sculptor Verocchio ; though, indeed, we do so rather to point him out as the connecting link which, as the pupil of Donatello, and the master of Leonardo da Vinci, Lorenzo di Credi, and Perugino, he forms in art, than for any other reason ; since the space and plan of this little work does not permit of our examining the work of all the great men who lived in this period of art-history. He too was trained as a goldsmith, but his beautiful works in metal have all long been gone, the last—statuettes of the twelve Apostles—having been stolen from the Vatican about a century ago. He was also a painter, and one of his works—a Baptism of Christ—is in the Florence Academy, to which the story attaches that on his young pupil Leonardo painting the golden-haired angel in the corner, he gave up painting in despair. Verocchio finally threw away the trammels of conventionality, and prepared the way for the exaggerated realism of Michael Angelo. Powerful in dramatic action, his sculpture is yet often crude

and angular in execution, and wanting in the soul and passion which redeemed Michael Angelo's most painful distortions. He was the central master of the Renaissance school of sculpture.

Of all the artist followers of Savonarola, Fra Bartolommeo, known in the world as Baccio della Porta, is perhaps the most celebrated. He was pupil to Cosimo Rosselli, and his early life was spent among the convents where his master's work chiefly lay, and the influences of which were probably never effaced from his gentle, meditative character. He would shrink away from his comrades as they went to their studies in those famous gardens which Lorenzo de' Medici had thrown open to the promising young artists of the day, and steal alone into the solemn quiet of the Carmine Church, to learn his art from Masaccio and the Lippis. It was in 1495, when Baccio was but twenty years of age, that Savonarola first preached in Florence Cathedral, and attracted the gentle young painter, whose quiet blameless life had prepared his mind to receive the teaching of the great Reformer. Baccio was among the first who were gathered under his personal influence, and, prompt to obey, he brought to the Bonfire of Vanities all the studies which might have come under condemnation. One would like to know somewhat of the

thoughts with which Savonarola inspired him during those years of his spiritual training, but not a vestige remains of this early period of his life, save a portrait of his master, inscribed, 'The Picture of Girolamo of Ferrara, the Prophet sent from God.' On that terrible Palm Sunday of 1498, when sacrilege and murder were enacted at S. Mark's, Baccio della Porta was one of the five hundred citizens who entered the convent to defend the prior. Horror-struck at the awful scene, he threw down his arms, and vowed to consecrate himself to God under the Dominican habit, if he escaped that day alive. Two years, however, passed, before he fulfilled his vow, and during this period was painted the first work of which we know anything, a Last Judgment, in the cemetery of S. Maria Nuova, now an outhouse; the only direct link—though indeed it is but a mutilated fragment—between the dying schools of mediæval Christendom, and Raffaele and Michael Angelo.* But the subject was beyond his capacity, and, notwithstanding its technical merits, there is an inadequacy in his treatment of this awful subject, which contrasts painfully with that of all the other great painters. In 1500 Baccio renounced the world, and with it his art,

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. iii. chap. xiii. p. 436.

taking the vows at the Dominican convent of Prato, and returning to S. Mark's to make his profession. After some years, however, various influences combined to induce him, at the expressed wish of the prior, to take up his pencil again in the service of the Church, and his first work was the restoration of Fra Angelico's frescoes. His old friend and comrade Mariotto was allowed to enter into partnership with him, and together they did much work. Raffaello also in the early part of his career, when at Florence, chose his society in preference to that of any other artist, and, himself learning much from the monk-artist, taught him much in return. There are some very sweet Madonnas by him in the Uffizi Gallery.

Lorenzo di Credi was a pupil of the great sculptor Verocchio, and his style followed in some degree that of his fellow-pupil Leonardo da Vinci, rather than the school of sacred art which still remained in Florence. Nevertheless, Lorenzo was an exclusively religious painter, having brought his share of pictures to the great bonfire, and never after painting any but sacred subjects. A laborious, careful, and conscientious workman, distilling his own oils, and grinding his own colours, he painted only easel pictures, the best remaining of which, are the altarpiece of the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in Pistoja

Cathedral, and a Nativity in the Florence Academy. He lived and worked entirely in Florence, where his name often occurs in the records as discussing with other artists, projects such as the restoration of the Cathedral, the placing of Michael Angelo's David.

The Della Robbia family, a little school in themselves, were devoted followers of Savonarola. Luca della Robbia* was the inventor of the beautiful tinted bas-reliefs so justly celebrated for their unique and exquisite beauty, and the secret of which died with the family. He too was apprenticed to that famous trade which produced some of the truest and noblest art of the middle ages, and whose guild ranked among the highest in honour and position in Italy. Luca learned his art of the best goldsmith of Florence, Leonardo de Ser Giovanni, and from him acquired early that delicacy and fineness of hand and touch which he carried with him to another branch of art. Determined however to devote himself to sculpture, Luca laboured, it is said, night and day, to master its technicalities; but of the works in this period of his life, which extended up to 1445, there are few memorials, the chief being the bronze

* There is an interesting account of the family in Perkins' 'Tuscan Sculptors,' vol. i. book iii. chap. vii.

doors of the sacristy of Florence Cathedral, two bas-reliefs, in the Uffizi, of the Martyrdom of S. Peter, and two attributed to him in Giotto's Campanile. There is also a beautiful monument by him in S. Francesco e Paolo, at the foot of Bello Sguardo Hill, of a bishop of Fiesole, Benozzo Federighi, decorated all round with enamelled tiles worked with flowers, which show that he had then made successful experiments in terra-cottas. Luca's first works in this material were very lightly coloured, the figures being left white, and blues and greens tinted into the backgrounds; after a time, however, the drapery, and at last the flesh, was coloured. Taking this difference between his earlier and later work, as a guide, the beautiful lunettes of the Resurrection and Ascension, over the doors of the Cathedral and its sacristy, may be considered among his early works. Of this period too is the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin in the Church of Osservanza, near Siena, conceived with exquisite feeling and taste. Probably of Luca's workmanship also, are the ceiling of a chapel in S. Miniato, the medallions outside Or San Michele, the doors of S. Pierino, an Annunciation in the Innocenti Church, and an altar in the north aisle of S. Apostoli. There is an exquisite purity of colour and refinement of thought in Luca's work, which none

of his family ever attained. His Madonnas and saints are as beautiful in ideal as they are reverent in feeling, and the sweet freshness of the blues and greens and violets from which his figures stand out, never jars on the eye, nor fails to attune itself to the ideality of the conception.

Luca's first pupils were his two brothers ; then his nephew Andrea, who with his four sons carried on the art in its second period. After Luca's death, the work was extended to friezes, such as that executed by Andrea and the younger Luca, at the Ceppo Hospital, Pistoja ; a laborious undertaking, occupying eleven years. The seven works of mercy were represented in it, and the colour of the whole is very brilliant. This same Luca went to Rome, where he paved the Vatican Loggia with tiles, which probably shared the fate of so many other works of art in the invasion. The arms of Leo X., done by him, are still to be seen in the Vatican ; he is said to have been recommended to that Pope by Raffaele. Many medalion portraits of Savonarola are said to have been done by the members of the Robbia family, one of which, bearing the date of 1496, is, or was, in the possession of Signor Cristiano Banti of Florence. Two other sons of Andrea's took the Dominican habit at S. Mark's. Among the artists who followed Savonarola into his

convent-life were also two miniature-painters, Fra Benedetto and Fra Eustachio, the latter of whom furnished Vasari in his old age with some of the materials for his history. The former was leading the gay and dissolute life so sadly common in Florence then ; but, having been induced to attend a course of Savonarola's sermons, returned from them a changed man. He gave up his immoral habits, regardless of the ridicule of his friends ; reformed his whole life, after many struggles and falls, and then threw himself at Savonarola's feet, and begged to be admitted into S. Mark's. Not until after many trials did the Prior consent to receive him, but at last he was permitted to put on the Dominican habit. His high-spirited, chivalrous nature was yet untamed when the hour of Savonarola's trial came. He took up arms in defence of his master on the invasion of the convent, and receiving, as S. Peter from a greater Master, a rebuke for his impetuous zeal, laid them down to ask that he might share Savonarola's fate. A long captivity was his martyrdom, which he spent in writing a poem called the Cedar of Lebanon, and which contained his gathered memories of the great prior of S. Mark's. A small portrait of Savonarola, painted at the head of some of his prophecies, is all that is left of his pencil.

Lastly, there was Cronaca, the great Florentine architect, who built the beautiful Franciscan Church on S. Miniato Hill, and changed the Palazzo Vecchio so as to serve for a place of assemblage for the Florentine government, when Savonarola had succeeded in banishing the Medici. The disciple and friend of Savonarola, faithful to the bitter end, and to the close of his long life, he would cease his story-telling,* for which he was famous, to talk of his memories of the great Reformer, so that Vasari said contemptuously of him, that whatever might be the subject on which he begun, he was sure to end with Savonarola.

Space fails us to tell more of the work which Savonarola did for Florentine art. All whom we have named here, and many more, followed through trouble and danger, through final disgrace and failure, him who would have saved Florence while yet there was time ; and these are with him now. There came a supreme hour when, degraded by an iniquitous tribunal, mocked and hooted by the multitude for whom he was laying down his life, the voice of the great leader passed into eternal silence ; leaving, from the depth of his earthly humiliation, no farewell word behind him, save that one calm answer to the miser-

* ' Tuscan Sculptors,' vol. i. bk. iv. ch. viii. p. 237.

able bishop who excommunicated him, "You cannot cut me off from the Church Triumphant." One failed him in that hour, and his story is the saddest in the annals of Christian art.

Pietro Vannucci della Pieve, called Perugino, from his place of residence, was born in 1446, of a poor though well-connected family. It is not known when his first visit to Florence was made; but in 1482 he was competing with Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, and others, for the work in the Palazzo Pubblico. The pictures of his early style are very rare; one of them is in the Louvre, a Madonna and Saints, painted with that quiet devotional feeling which characterised the Umbrian school, and with all the sweetness which is such a charm in Perugino's work. About 1483 he was summoned to Rome to paint in the Sistine Chapel, where two of his works remain—the Baptism of Christ, and the Delivery of the Keys to S. Peter; the others were destroyed to make room for Michael Angelo's Last Judgment. The only other trace of work done in Rome, is an altar-piece of the Nativity in the Albani Villa, executed while on a second visit there in 1491. After this he settled in Florence, and there did some of his most beautiful frescoes, for the convent of S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, among which, in the chapter-house, is the lovely picture

of the Crucifixion, lately engraved by the Arundel Society—perhaps at once the most tender, the most reverent, and the most sublime conception of that subject, in the range of mediæval art. It was at this period of Perugino's life—from 1492 to 1498—that he passed under the influence of the great Florentine preacher, and caught the fire of his devotion, the reflected light of which, burns in pictures painted by the artist at this period of his life. Vasari, in his history, has covered the name of Perugino with reproach, accusing him of avarice, falsehood, and infidelity—one can hardly believe, in entire ignorance of the disingenuousness of his statements. Perugino was not a Florentine, a misfortune almost amounting to a crime in itself, in the eyes of the bigoted Florentine historian; he was also the enemy of Michael Angelo, or at any rate seems to have been always ready to quarrel with that somewhat imperious genius, whose follower and devotee Vasari was; and in addition to these reasons for Vasari's dislike of him, he was an adherent of Savonarola, a name on which Vasari never lost an opportunity of casting scorn. M. Rio, however, has defended the early life of the great painter successfully and well, "if indeed," as Professor Ruskin remarks, "there be not contradiction enough" of Vasari's calumnies "in every line that the hand of

Perugino drew." "A noble, gracious, and quiet labourer—never weary, never impatient, never untender, never untrue. Not Tintoret in power, not Raffaele in flexibility, not Holbein in veracity, not Luini in love—their gathered gifts he has, in balanced and fruitful measure, fit to be the guide and impulse, and father of all." * He has left a record of his convictions in that period of his life, in a portrait of himself done about 1494; on the scroll which he holds the words written of a text to one of Savonarola's sermons, which had perhaps engraved itself specially on his heart, *Deum time*. In the fatal year 1498, which saw the end of the Florentine dreams of freedom under Savonarola, we see the first diminishing of his power, in carelessness of execution and lifelessness of design. Before his power had visibly failed, however, he had painted the beautiful triptych for the monastery at Pavia, now in the National Gallery, in the designs of which he was assisted by the young Raffaele, then his pupil. The beautiful central group is thought indeed to have been painted after Raffaele's design,† although the arrangement is after Perugino's own favourite manner. The Tobit and the angel, also supposed to

* 'Ariadne Florentina,' No. ii. by Mr. Ruskin.

† In the Oxford Collection, No. 7.

be taken from a design of Raffaello's,* occupying one wing, is perhaps the feeblest part of the picture;† but the S. Michael of the other side is one of his happiest conceptions, peculiarly his own, and reproduced in several pictures. "His triple crest unshaken in heaven, his hand fallen on his crossleted sword, the truth girdle binding his undinted armour; God has put His power upon him, resistless radiance is on his limbs; no lines are there of earthly strength, no trace on the divine features of earthly anger; trustful and thoughtful, fearless, but full of love, incapable except of the repose of eternal conquest, vessel and instrument of Omnipotence, filled like a cloud with the victor light, the dust of principalities and powers beneath his feet, the murmur of hell against him heard by his spiritual ear like the winding of a shell on the far-off sea-shore."‡

In 1500 he did what may be called his last great picture, the Assumption of the Florence Academy. About 1505 he left Florence for Perugia, feeling bitterly the criticism of the Florentine artists, and the failure of his reputation, and there painted the frescoes in the Sala del Cambio. In 1507 he was in

* The drawing for this is in the British Museum.

† Oxford Collection, No. 16.

‡ 'Modern Painters,' vol. ii. sect. ii. chap. v. p. 216.

Rome again, but soon left, finding himself supplanted by Raffaello there, as he had been by Michael Angelo at Florence. In the Vatican is one of his later pictures, to which M. Rio has called attention by an interpretation which, if fanciful, is yet not altogether improbable. It represents the Resurrection, the Lord rising out of the tomb amidst the sleeping soldiers, one of whom is awakened, and is gazing doubtful and perplexed, as though disbelieving his sight. In that soldier, says M. Rio,* Perugino has represented himself both actually and symbolically, and furnished a key to the problem of his mysterious decline. How it was that Perugino renounced the faith which had guided his life, and ended his days in scepticism, we know not. Possibly some flaw of selfishness or covetousness had ever pervaded his life unseen, and he looked unconsciously to some political future in Savonarola's revolution, in which he would have his share. Perhaps he failed to carry out, in his life, the teaching with which Savonarola had inspired his imagination; perhaps content with idealising the human teacher, he had not learned to look to the great Master of all beauty, to whom Savonarola would have led him. We know not. All that we

* 'De l'Art Chrétien,' vol. ii. ch. ix. p. 257.

do know is that he failed in the hour of trial, and that he ended by denying Him for whose sake Savonarola died the martyr's death. Those who gathered round his dying bed, urged him to make his confession. "I wish to see," was the sarcastic answer, "how a soul will fare in that Land, which has not been confessed." And so he passed into the great, unknown Future.

PICTURES BY FLORENTINE ARTISTS OF THE RENAISSANCE IN BRITISH GALLERIES.

COSIMO ROSSELLI.

<i>National Gallery</i>	S. Jerome in the Desert.
<i>Mr. Maitland</i>	Crucifixion, with saints.
<i>Late Mr. Bromley</i>	Virgin, Child, and saints.
<i>Wooton Hall</i>	Virgin and Child enthroned.

LUCA SIGNORELLI.

<i>National Gallery</i>	Triumph of Chastity.
<i>Oxford Gallery</i>	1. Salutation. 2. S. Paul. 3. Holy Family.*
<i>Liverpool Institute</i>	Virgin and Child.
<i>Keir, Scotland</i>	Pietà.
<i>Glentyon, Scotland</i>	Christ in the house of the Pharisee.

* Probably none of these are genuine.

- Lord Taunton* Martyrdom of S. Katherine.
Marquis of Lothian SS. Peter and Stephen.
Mr. Barker 1. S. George and Dragon. 2. Two
 pilasters, with saints.

PERUGINO. •

- National Gallery* 1. Triptych. Virgin adoring In-
 fant Christ. 2. Virgin, Child,
 and S. John.
Hampton Court 1. Portrait of a lady. 2. Saint
 with a cross. 3. Portrait of a
 gentleman.
Dudley House Virgin.
Lord Taunton Burial of Christ.
Bowood Virgin and Child.
Panshanger Portrait of a gentleman.
Gosford House, Scotland . . . Virgin, Child, and S. John Baptist.
Late Northwick Collection . . Virgin, Child, and saints.
Mr. Barker Christ appearing to S. Mary Mag-
 dalene.
Mrs. B.-Johnstone 1. Crucifixion. 2. S. Francis re-
 ceiving the Stigmata.

GHIRLANDAJO.

- British Museum* Portrait sketch.
Blenheim Preaching of S. John Baptist.
Bowood Predella of above-mentioned pic-
 ture.
Late Sir C. Eastlake Virgin and Child.
Mr. Barker Virgin, Child, and saints.
Mr. Maitland S. Dominic.

FRA BARTOLOMMEO.

- Stafford House* Virgin, Child, and S. John Baptist.
Grosvenor House Virgin, Child, and saints.

- Panshanger* 1, 2. Holy Families. 3. Burial of S. Antonino.
- Lord Taunton* Virgin, Child, and saints.
- Lord Elcho* Virgin and Child, enthroned.
- Late Northwick Collection* . . 1, 2, 3. Holy Families. 4. Three saints.
- Hamilton Palace, Scotland* . . Holy Family.
- Lord Wenlock* Two friars.
- Sir Anthony Stirling* Crucifixion.
- Sir W. Miles* Virgin and Child.
- Mr. Hoskins* Virgin, Child, and saints.
- Mr. Derby* Marriage of S. Katherine.
- Mr. Holford* Virgin, Child, and saints enthroned.
- Mr. Baring* Sketch of Holy Family.

FRANCIA.

- National Gallery* 1. Virgin and Child enthroned, with saints. 2. Pietà. 3. Virgin, Child, and Saints.
- Lord Ward* Virgin, Child, and S. Joseph.
- Hampton Court* Baptism of Christ.
- Late Lord Northwick* Annunciation.
- Mr. Baring* 1. Lucretia. 2. Virgin enthroned.
- Stoke* Baptism of Christ.

PINTURICCHIO.

- National Gallery* 1. Madonna and Child. 2. S. Katherine of Alexandria. 3. Ulysses and Penelope. 4, 5, 6. Griselda.
- Mr. Barker* Ulysses and Penelope. *Fresco.*
- Dudley House* Pieces of a predella, representing a Baptism and a friar preaching.
- Mr. Morley, Ireland* 1. Death of Hector. 2. Taking of Troy.

LORENZO DI CREDI.

- National Gallery* I. Virgin and Child. 2. Virgin
adoring Infant Christ.
- Oxford Gallery* Virgin and Child.
- Lord Ward* Two small pictures.
- Late Rogers Collection* Coronation of the Virgin.
- Mr. Barker* I. Virgin and Child enthroned.
2, 3, 4. Three other Madonnas.
- Corsham Court* Virgin, Child, and angels.

CHAPTER XII.

RAFFAELLE.

Born 1483. Died 1520.

A SATISFACTORY sketch of the life of Raffaelle, within the prescribed limits of this chapter, seems to the writer a well-nigh impossible task to achieve. The best that can be done is to mark out the different periods of that short and brilliant life, which comprehends at once the culminating point, the decline, and the extinction of Christian art, and to refer those of our readers who wish for further acquaintance with the period, to the standard works, in which the subject of Raffaelle's life and works has been exhaustively treated.

Vasari was, until within the last century, the chief source whence the writers on Raffaelle, such as Duppa and De Quincey, derived their information, and founded their statements. Von Rumohr set the example of careful independent research, and the

later work of M. Passavant has now almost superseded previous books on the subject, and leaves little to be desired. Mr. Robinson's valuable Catalogue and critical account of the Oxford collection, completes the list of authorities. We take this opportunity of warning our readers once more that Vasari's statements are by no means to be relied on; for, besides being very careless as to the accuracy of his facts, he was, it must be remembered, Florentine, and consequently underrated everything and everybody who was not Florentine also. He passes over the Sienese school altogether, Florence and Siena having been opposed to each other ever since the formation of the Guelph and Ghibelline leagues. He ridicules the Bolognese school, whence came that painter of exquisite Madonnas, Francesco Francia. He even speaks contemptuously of Raffaello's figure drawing, because he was not taught to draw the nude in the Florentine method; and throws a slur on Raffaello's original genius, by asserting that he tried to rival Leonardo da Vinci in his own special line of perfection, and that he was never so great as when imitating Michael Angelo.

"Federigo Feltrio, Duke of Urbino, who in his days was the light of Italy in the arts of peace, and in arms, among his other noble works built a most magnificent palace on the rugged declivity of Urbino.

This structure had the reputation of being the finest that Italy had seen up to that time. Not only did the Duke enrich it with tasteful and appropriate ornaments, but enhanced its splendour by a collection of antique marble and bronze statues, and choice pictures, and with vast expense got together a great number of most excellent books.” *

This then was the school of the young Raffaelle ; † and here, in the peaceful Umbrian city, and amidst its treasures of ancient art, and gardens rivalling those of the Medici at Florence, the young painter was nurtured. The once beautiful city is now almost forgotten, save by students of history ; the story of its art, buried in the ruins of the splendid buildings ; the names of Luciana Lauranna, the architect of the “ magnificent palace,” ‡ and of Pietro della Francesca, the accomplished painter, § forgotten ; and it is to Dante only that the exquisite miniaturist, Oderigo della Gubbio, owes his immortality. First in culture and in chivalry, purest in religion and morals, the

* See Eastlake's ‘ Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts,’ first series, *Life of Raffaelle*. The words in commas are quoted by him from Bellori.

† A sketch-book of his is preserved at Venice, full of studies from the palace of Urbino.

‡ He built both the palaces of the Duke, those of Urbino and of Gubbio.

§ A portrait by whom is in the Florentine Gallery, of Duke Federico and his wife.

little "Athens of Umbria" shone brightly in the fifteenth century, amidst the pagan darkness of Italy, and is a relief to contemplate, as we turn from the sins and follies of the Medici and the Borgias. Hereditary counts had ruled the little state, and led its citizens to war, long ere the Medici had been heard of in Florence; and an equitable government had attached the people to their feudal lord, in a degree to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in Italian history. Much of our knowledge of the gallant Duke Federigo* is derived from a poem, written in his honour by Raffaello's father, Giovanni Sanzio. It was by him that the Flemish painters were first employed to much extent in Italy, and a painting by Van Eyck's pupil, Justin of Ghent, is still to be seen in the Church of S. Agatha at Urbino.

It seems necessary to explain here what is meant by the Umbrian school, under which name our readers will find the art of the valley of the upper Tiber classified, in most books on Italian art. Shadowed and partly enclosed by the line of the Apennines, the district around Assisi appears to have

* The title of Duke of Urbino was conferred on Count Federigo by Sixtus IV., in 1474, on the marriage of his daughter with the Pope's nephew, Giovanni della Rovere.

specially retained the influence of that wonderful man, who lived and died under the shadow of its solemn mountain borders. Perugia, Gubbio, Urbino, and Foligno were the chief centres of a school which, receiving its impulse from the contemplative Siennese painters, preserved the types and the quiet spirituality of that school, long after the art of Siena itself had become more or less merged in that of Florence. Assisi was the centre of this phase of art; and such a mighty reality had S. Francis made his doctrines, that we trace, by no fancied line, but by the recognised path of art history, an influence, emanating from the sepulchre-church of Assisi, stretching over the whole district, and lasting on, as long as there was life left in the art of Italy. Oderigo the miniaturist was one of its founders; Perugino, Francia, and Pinturicchio were its last representatives, and with them closed the period of sacred art in Italy.*

It was then, in the last and most brilliant period of a school which had lasted for two hundred and fifty years, that Raffaele was born, and under the influences of the last great group of Christian painters,

* A collection of pictures of the Umbrian school, gathered from the suppressed convents, has lately been formed in a disused church at Foligno; and here the school may be seen in its different stages.

that his mind and taste were formed. His father, Giovanni Sanzio, was a painter of no mean reputation in his native city ; and under him, and Perugino, the young Raffaele learned the elements of his art. The Santi family settled at Urbino early in the fifteenth century ; and Giovanni bought the house now known as Raffaele's birth-place, and where are still traces of painting on the walls, done probably by the elder Sanzio. Born in 1483, before he was twelve years old he had lost both father and mother, and was passing an unhappy childhood amidst the continuous quarrelling of his stepmother and guardian ; relieved only by the kindness of his mother's brother, who was as a father to the young orphan, and for whom Raffaele retained, all his life, the deepest affection. The disputes between the different relations about their young charge, were at length brought to an end by Raffaele being sent to the school of Perugino, then at the height of his fame (1495), and the leader of Italian painting. In Perugia he probably remained for several years, carefully copying his master's sketches, but producing, so far as we know, no original drawings. In the sacristy of S. Pietro Maggiore at Perugia, is preserved one of the first paintings which he executed in the school of Perugino, and the only

one left of this early period. It is a picture of the Infant Saviour and S. John Baptist embracing each other, copied from a picture of Perugino's now in the Marseilles Museum. In 1500 he received his first commission, to paint two banners, and a picture, for a church of Città di Castello. One of the banners, representing the Blessed Trinity and Saints on one side, and the Creation of Eve on the other, is still to be seen there ; the altar-piece is, says Mr. Robinson, lost ; but Kùgler mentions a crucifixion of this period as in Lord Ward's collection, we know not whether accurately or not. After painting these, Raffaele probably returned to Perugino's studio ; but the confidence with which he was now regarded at Perugia, is shown by the fact that he was, in 1503, invited by Pinturicchio to prepare the designs for his work of decorating the cathedral library at Siena, with frescoes commemorative of the citizen and bishop of that town, who had been raised to the Papal throne under the name of Pius II. Three finished drawings for these frescoes are preserved in the collections of the Uffizi, Perugia, and Chatsworth. If, as is the general opinion now, Raffaele's drawings were original designs,* the fact shows the admiration

* Study No. 14, Oxford Collection.

which his genius commanded at that early period of his career. An interesting memorial of Pinturicchio's regard for the young painter is in one of these frescoes, in a portrait of Raffaele, himself standing behind, gazing on him. That Raffaele was himself at Siena is proved by his copy of the Three Graces from the group in that Library, his drawing for which is in Dudley House. Two of his loveliest Madonnas are of this period.* In one, the Infant Christ lies on a cushion by which the Blessed Virgin kneels, S. Jerome and S. Francis on each side; in the other, which is an Adoration of the Magi, the Blessed Virgin and two angels kneel around the Holy Child. It is thought by Mr. Robinson that Raffaele may have prepared the designs, at this time, for Perugino's great picture of the National Gallery, and that the beautiful little cartoon in the Oxford Collection of the Holy Child held by an angel, S. Mary and S. Joseph kneeling on each side, was a design for the centre-piece.† Perugino at least reproduced Raffaele's design‡ for the wing containing the angel and Tobias. Such mutual assistance was both legitimate and common in the best ages of art; and in this

* In the Berlin Gallery.

† Oxford Collection, No. 7.

‡ Oxford Collection, No. 16.

particular instance it gives an additional interest to Perugino's noble picture, to know that he so frankly availed himself of the superior genius of his young pupil. At the same time, the beautiful Coronation of the Virgin,* now in the Vatican, was painted. The Blessed Virgin is enthroned on clouds by the side of Christ, Who places the crown on her head, while angels play around them on instruments; below, the Apostles are grouped around the open tomb of the Virgin, whence, according to the legend, lilies have blossomed. The upper part of this picture is very Peruginesque; but the face of our Lord is somewhat weak, and in the attitudes and draperies of the Apostles is a shade of that mannerism which afterwards became so fatal to Raffaelle's pictures. A lovely little Madonna, painted also about this time, and now at Perugia, represents the Virgin Mother, with the Child in her arms, reading as she walks amidst a sweet spring landscape of trees and distant mountains. In 1504 were painted the celebrated 'Sposalizio,' or Marriage of the Virgin, in which Raffaelle borrowed from Perugino's great picture for the cathedral of Perugia; and also the charming little allegorical picture in the National Gallery. A

* Studies Nos. 9 and 10, Oxford Collection.

knight sleeps under a laurel-tree, and as he dreams of his future career, and of honour and success, two female figures approach him ; one, crimson-robed, offers him a book and sword ; the other, flowers. Perhaps, as Passavant suggests, he was thinking of himself. But the time for his choice was not yet come, and when it did come, he knew it not. In the autumn of the same year he revisited his native city, which was now under happier conditions than it had known since the accession of the tyrant Borgia, when Duke Guidobaldo had been driven away from his state, and obliged to take refuge at Venice, and Urbino placed under the detested yoke of Rome. In the summer of 1503, the welcome news arrived that the tyrant "whose debauchery no shame restrained, whose treaties no good faith sanctioned, to whose vengeance pity was unknown," was gone to his account ; and it was in vain that Cæsar Borgia attempted to retain his hold over Romagna. The citizens of Urbino arose as one man, drove out the hated troops of the Pope, and recalled their beloved duke. From henceforth the house of Montefeltro was secure, since the Duke was allied to the new Pope by family ties ; and the days of which we are writing were the golden days of the little state. Duke Guidobaldo's learning,

piety, and noble character, have made his name shine brightly in history, as, in his lifetime, his virtues won him the devotion of all who knew him, from prince to peasant. An elegant scholar, unmatched by any European prince in general culture, he yet never indulged in that passion for the heathen philosophy which was the bane of the age; and it was said that S. Chrysostom and S. Basil were his chosen studies. Raffaele's portrait of him is lost, with those of the other grandees of that famous court, and the only memorial of the gentle and chivalrous Duke of Urbino is in a picture by Giovanni Sanzio, still at Urbino.

Into the inner circle of that elegant court,* then, Raffaele was admitted, on his return to his native city, and there formed the most important of the friendships of his after-life. There was Giuliano de' Medici, brother of Leo X., passing the years of his exile in the atmosphere of that cultivated society. There was Cardinal Bembo, one of the most famous men of his age, the friend and correspondent of Lucrezia Borgia, a lock of whose auburn hair was found at his death;† who, satiated with learning,

* For a full description of the court of Urbino, with all its celebrated people, see Dennistoun's 'Dukes of Urbino,' vol. ii.

† It is still preserved, with her letters to Cardinal Bembo, at Milan.

and honours, and pleasure, desired only, in his old age, to be the "unfettered Bembo of other days." "But what better can one make of life?" he would add, having found, like the king of old, that all is vanity. There also was Cardinal Bibbiena, the greatest patron of art and letters a few years later in Rome, to whom the brilliancy of the court of Leo X. was chiefly owing; who desired to ally himself with Raffaele, by giving him his niece in marriage. Last, but not least, there was the warmest friend of Raffaele's after-life, the brightest star in a brilliant constellation, Count Baldassare of Castiglione, whom Charles V. called "one of the best knights in the world." Renowned in war, happy in love and marriage, unblemished in life and politics in the most dissolute age of European history, the Bayard of his time and country, "*sans peur et sans reproche*," he was known and loved in all the courts of Europe, as one of the most finished gentlemen in Christendom. He it was who was sent as ambassador to Henry VII., to acknowledge the honour conferred on Duke Guidobaldo by the King of England, in giving him the Order of the Garter; taking with him, among his presents, Raffaele's beautiful picture of S. George and the

Dragon,* painted for the occasion, as a compliment to the chivalry of England. Count Baldassare wrote a book, called '*Il Corteggiano*,' intended as a portrait of the court of Urbino, and to which we owe much of our knowledge of its manners and customs. We see clearly from it, how much of the pure morality of that court was due to the example of the spotless married life of the duke and duchess, and to the influence of female society. The name of the beautiful and accomplished Duchess Elisabetta was probably well known in England at that period, and it has even been suggested that Shakespeare portrayed her in his *Miranda*. She and her young widowed sister-in-law, the Lady Emilia Pia, presided over the pleasant social gatherings of the court, after the Duke, whose failing health incapacitated him for fatigue, had retired to rest; and they led and restrained the conversation and amusements, till the golden light, breaking over the hills of Monte Catri, and shining on the eastern windows of the beautiful palace, gave the signal to retire. The deserted rooms, where knights, and ladies, and great men

* This was put up for sale, with the rest of Charles I.'s collection, at his death. It is now at St. Petersburg. There is a study for it in the Oxford Collection, No. 35.

once walked, where Raffaele studied, and from whose walls once looked down the renowned men of all ages, are now filled with looms, but they are sacred with memories which no desecration can efface ; and in the beautiful inlaid panelling of the wainscoting, is still to be seen the memorial of the pride of the dukes of Urbino, in England's gift of the Order of the Garter.

But Raffaele was too restless for knowledge and for fame, to remain long in the quiet little court ; and he obtained from the Lady Emilia a letter of recommendation to the Gonfaloniere at Florence, in which she says that Raffaele is going there "to perfect his studies." So, under pleasant auspices, favoured by all the great patrons of art there, and received into the patrician society, Raffaele made his first visit to the great centre of Italian art, and began another period of his life and painting.

Leonardo da Vinci's great cartoon of the Battle of the Standard, painted in competition with Michael Angelo, had been finished the year before ; and the two were now exhibited in Florence, and were the chief attraction and study of all the young artists. Vasari tells us that Raffaele was "astonished at the sight of Leonardo's work ;" and his admiration is proved, both by the studies* which he made from the

* Oxford Collection, No. 28.

cartoon, and by the change which passed over his work at this time, and which is greatly attributable to Leonardo's influence. It has been noticed specially, that the fixed smile on the faces of his Madonnas was adopted from Leonardo, and is first seen now. His studies, however, were not confined to Leonardo, and he spent much time in the Carmine Church, among the frescoes of Masaccio. It was at this time, also, that he formed his great friendship with Fra Bartolommeo, and with the young Ridolfo Ghirlandajo; and an interesting memento of his connection with the former remains in the two sketches of Fra Bartolommeo's head, which fill the corners of two sheets of studies at Oxford.* Of this period is the portrait of himself as a youth of sixteen, so often engraved, in black dress and cap, the long hair falling over his shoulders, and the beautiful face upturned.†

It is in the Madonnas painted at this time, most of which are well known in England from prints and photographs, that we see the change which has passed over Raffaele's spirit. The Madonna della Gran Duca‡ has in it the mingling of the last touches of the reverence and solemnity of the Umbrian school,

* Nos. 28 and 29.

† Oxford Collection, No. 26.

‡ So called from its owner, Ferdinand of Tuscany, who carried it with him in all his wanderings.

with the earthly beauty, and mere maternal expression, of his new style. It is the well-known picture of three-quarters length, the blessed Virgin in scarlet dress and blue mantle, with the Florentine oval face and arched eyebrows,* holding the Child in her arms, who has put one hand on her breast. The final change from Raffaele's early inspiration is marked by the *Madonna del Baldacchino*, painted about the same time (1505);† in which the fresh blue sky and sweet landscape of his early work is shut out by brown wainscot and Renaissance architecture, and the adoring angels with garments swept by the breezes of heaven, changed into the "kicking gracefulness" of Cupids.

In 1506 Raffaele went to Urbino, to paint the picture of S. George and the Dragon,‡ for Henry VII. ; but after painting this, and the fine S. Michael of the Louvre, he returned to Florence, where, amidst the enchantment of its brilliant society, the inexhaustible wealth of its Medicean treasures, and the companionship of the circle of artists who met daily in the studio of Baccio d'Agnolo, the sculptor, he

* The high foreheads, and pencilled eyebrows, which we see in pictures of that period in Italy, were produced by artificial means, among the ladies of that time.

† Now at Blenheim.

‡ For which No. 35 in the Oxford Collection is a study.

found a more congenial home than among the quiet Umbrian mountains. So well established was his reputation, that, the year before that of which we are writing, the nuns of Perugia having requested the council to find them the best artist of the time, who might paint them an altar-piece for their chapel, it was unanimously decided that Master Raffaello of Urbino was the most fit.*

The same year Raffaello went to Bologna, where he painted the picture of the Entombment, now in the Borghese Palace. The results of his Florentine studies are clearly visible in the increased power of figure-drawing shown in this work; but the affectation of gesture, and display of anatomical skill, are far more apparent than in any previous painting, and the repose and sweet feeling of his early work are quite gone. A gleam of real devotion, however, lights up one of the last works of this period, the beautiful S. Catherine,† “looking up to heaven in the dawn of the eternal day, with her lips parted in the resting from her pain.”

It is curious to trace the gradual deterioration of

* This picture, delayed so long that it was completed by Raffaello's pupils after his death, is now in the Vatican.

† Of the National Gallery. Sketches 52 and 53 in the Oxford Collection are supposed to be studies for it. Mr. Robinson, however, thinks that it belongs to the first year of his Roman period.

Raffaëlle, in the paintings of his Madonnas, during the years of his residence in Florence (1503-1508). There is the first domestic one, called the 'Madonna del Cardellino,'* with the little S. John presenting his goldfinch, the bright open sky for background; and the two others, painted for his friend Taddeo Taddei, of the same type, still very sweet—those of the Belvidere, and of the Palm-tree.† Then the Blenheim Madonna first replaces the bright landscape by wainscot and baldacchino. The Madonna Gran Duca has far more of the human mother; the 'Belle Jardinière'‡ is a mere domestic scene; in the pictures of the Berlin Museum, and of Lord Cowper's collection, there remains little sense of the sacredness of the subject; and the Holy Family of Munich is wholly artificial in grouping, and attitudinised in gesture, so that it is called, from the composition, the 'Pyramid.'

While yet the 'Belle Jardinière,'§ and other pictures, were unfinished, the message came which

* In the Florence Gallery. Oxford studies, Nos. 47, 48, 49.

† The one is at Vienna, the other in Lord Ellesmere's collection. For a study of the former see Oxford Collection, No. 33.

‡ In the Louvre. Oxford study, No. 50.

§ This is thought to be the picture mentioned by Vasari, as having been finished by Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, after Raffaëlle's departure to Rome. No. 50 in the Oxford Collection is a study for it.

realised his highest ambition; and a prospect greater than perhaps he had dared to hope for so early in life, opened to him, in the summons to the court of Julius II., to paint in the Vatican.

When Julius II. succeeded Alexander Borgia on the Pontifical throne, he refused to occupy that part of the Vatican palace which had been the scene of that accursed life, exclaiming, when his friends suggested the removal of the portraits which occupied the walls, that "when all the pictures should be destroyed, the very walls would serve to recall the memory of that Simoniac!" It was then proposed that the next story, which had been partly decorated by Perugino and others, under Sixtus IV., should be fitted up for the new Pope's residence; and these apartments it was, which Raffaele was called to paint. His summons to the Pontifical court is attributed to the influence of Bramante, the great architect, who was in high favour with the new Pope. He it was who built the magnificent 'Loggie,' or open galleries of three stories, round three sides of the court of S. Damasus, made famous afterwards by Raffaele's arabesques; and which, left unfinished at their deaths, were completed by Pius IV.

In the 'Camera della Segnatura,' then, Raffaele began his work in Rome, and the third period of his

career; his first subject the 'Theology,' commonly (but erroneously) called the 'Dispute of the Sacrament.'* The Vatican paintings of Raffaele cover the ceilings and walls of three rooms, and a large saloon. The roofs are arched, and the groined compartments of the Camera della Segnatura contain medallions, with allegorical personifications of the subjects of the frescoes, and four oblong pictures; the rest of the painting, by Giovanni Antonio, having been left untouched by Raffaele, who always spared the work of other artists when he could. Theology, Poetry, Philosophy, and Ethics, are the subjects of the four great frescoes of the first room; the corresponding medallions of the ceiling being allegorical figures personifying the subject, with the exception of the last, the representative figure of which is Justice. The latter subject is always called Jurisprudence, but the writer follows Sir Charles Eastlake's explanation.† The latter fresco has, he says, been miscalled Jurisprudence, from a mistaken apprehension of the presiding figure of Justice in the ceiling above. This difference is not so unimportant as at first sight appears; for it throws a light on the prevailing

* Oxford studies, Nos. 60-67.

† 'Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts,' second series.

'How to observe,' ch. ii. p. 266.

system of philosophy at the time, and proves the predominance of the Aristotelian philosophy in Rome, before the accession of the Platonist Leo X. According to Aristotle's system, there are three cardinal virtues only—Prudence, the head of the intellectual virtues; Temperance, which presides over the passions; and Fortitude, which governs the defensive impulses. Justice, instead of making a fourth, was supposed to reside in the will, mingled with all the three, and give them a motive power. So we see, in Raffaelle's system of arrangement, how accurate his knowledge must have been of the ancient philosophies. The degree of classical knowledge displayed in these frescoes, is indeed truly astonishing, when we consider the limited range of an artist's education in that age, and the incessant labour which could have left Raffaelle but little time for other studies. It was doubtless in the cultivated courts of Urbino and Florence, and in the still more classical atmosphere of Rome, that he acquired this knowledge of, and sympathy with, the Greek philosophies; and his pictures thus became more and more filled with the ideas which were so fascinating to all the powerful minds of the age, and in which such men as Cardinal Bembo were his tutors.

The great idea of the 'Theology' is the relation of

God to man, begun by the Incarnation, and extended through the Sacramental system to the end of time. In the upper part of the picture are representations of the blessed Trinity. Above all is God the Father, surrounded by Cherubim and Seraphim, and angels chanting the Seraphic Hymn. Amidst the company of the saints, is God the Son, the Blessed Virgin at His right hand; below, the Holy Spirit, with four Cherubim holding the Gospels, descends on the visible Church. The patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs are seated on a semicircle of clouds, each prominent figure having its own special significance with regard to the subject. It would take long to exhaust the depth of thought in this picture. There is Adam, to whom the first promise of the Incarnation was made; Abraham, the father of the chosen seed; Moses, the giver of the Law; David, the author of the Church's prayer-book; S. Peter, the guardian of the faith; S. John the Divine, the revealer of the future destiny of the Church; S. Stephen, the first witness to the faith; S. Paul, the founder of the Gentile Church; S. George, the mystical champion of Christendom. A semicircle round the altar represents the visible Church, the monstrance of the blessed Sacrament in the midst; around are grouped the four great fathers, S. Jerome, S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, S. Gregory.

Then come S. Bernard, Peter Lombard, Duns Scotus, S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Bonaventure, and Innocent III., each representing some special development of Catholic doctrine. Dante, the great poet-theologian, stands below ; Savonarola not far off. To the left we gladly recognise Raffaele's tribute to Catholic art, in Fra Angelico. Below are a mixed crowd of people, among whom are schismatics and heretics ; heresy being personified by a sectary surrounded by hearers, and interpreting Holy Scripture.*

In the second great fresco, that of 'Poetry,' Apollo is seated on Mount Parnassus, lord of the domain of art, elevated to equal rank with the Lord of Heaven and earth in the first picture, surrounded by his choir the Muses, all the great poets of the heathen world grouped around.†

The third fresco, thought to be Raffaele's masterpiece, representing Philosophy, and generally known as the 'School of Athens,' is an assembly of the philosophers of the world, ranged in groups of their rank and schools. First, the schools of Greece, in the historical order of their development ; below, the masters of geometry,‡ arithmetic, and astronomy,

* Oxford studies, Nos. 60-67.

† Oxford studies, Nos. 68, 69.

‡ Bramante stood for the figure of Euclid.

considered by Plato as the preparatory schools. On the left, grouped round Pythagoras, are the more ancient schools ; and to the right are the Stoics, Cynics, and Epicureans. Plato and Aristotle stand as the centre of the composition,* presiding over the philosophy which was indeed the religion of the sixteenth century.

The last fresco, that of Ethics, represents the Emperor Justinian delivering the Codex ; and on the right, Pope Gregory IX. giving the decretals, surrounded by cardinals. This part of the picture is specially interesting, because all the figures are portraits, Julius II. standing in the place of Gregory IX., and the future Leo X. and Paul III. among the cardinals. In this picture, Raffaelle seems to have begun to employ his pupils more extensively in the working out of his ideas. This also is the first time that he portrayed the Pope and his court as representatives of the great historical characters ; a species of refined flattery which he employed to a great extent in the Chamber of Heliodorus.

Shortly before the death of Julius II. (1512)† Raffaelle had begun this second room, called the

* Oxford studies, Nos. 70-74.

† There are several Madonnas of this period also, among which is that of the Bridgewater Gallery.

Chamber of Heliodorus, from the principal painting, representing the expulsion from Jerusalem of Heliodorus, the treasurer of Seleucus, who tried to plunder the Temple.* This fresco and that of the celebrated Mass of Bolsena,† are marked by increased power of colour and composition, so that it has been said that Raffaelle's fame as a colourist rests on them; but they are marked also by increasing affectation and mannerism. The other frescoes in this room are Attila,‡ and the Deliverance of S. Peter.

The works in the Vatican were scarcely interrupted by the death of Julius II.; for his successor, Giovanni de' Medici, now Leo X., was as great a lover of art as any of his family; and while quite as ambitious to add to the magnificence of the Papal court, was far more cultivated and refined than the warlike Julius II. Under Leo was completed the fourth and last period of Raffaelle's life, who now rose rapidly in honour and wealth; and the ruin of his great genius, begun by the baneful influences of Rome, was completed under the learned and sceptical Leo X. The frescoes of the third room, called the Chamber of

* Related in 2 Maccabees iii. Full descriptions of these paintings, and those of the other rooms, will be found in Passavant and Kügler. Oxford studies, Nos. 85, 86.

† Oxford studies, Nos. 87—89.

‡ Oxford studies, No. 90.

Charlemagne,* were begun in 1514, and finished in 1517. Those of the fourth room, called the Chamber of Constantine (1519-1524), were executed by Giulio Romano from Raffaele's designs.

In 1512 were painted those frescoes of the Prophets and Sibyls in the Church of S. Augustine, the Isaiah in which is said by Vasari to have been repainted by Raffaele after seeing Michael Angelo's wonderful figure on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and which is an unquestionable imitation of his style. While these works were in progress, Raffaele also undertook the completion and decoration of the Loggie, left unfinished by Bramante's death. The middle story was ornamented by Raffaele with stuccoes and with those celebrated arabesques which Professor Ruskin has so well described as "elegant idlenesses;" and the roof was painted after Raffaele's designs by his pupils, in a series of fifty-two subjects, called 'Raffaele's Bible.'† In 1515, were designed the ten cartoons for the tapestries of the Sistine Chapel,‡ seven of which are preserved at the Kensington Museum; the three which are lost being the Stoning of S. Stephen, the Conversion of S. Paul, and his Delivery from Prison. The

* Oxford studies, Nos. 98-102. † Oxford studies, Nos. 103-116.

‡ Oxford studies, Nos. 117-120.

tapestries themselves are in the Vatican, but in consequence of the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo having monopolised the space into which some of them were intended to fit, they were not hung in the chapel. The Chevalier Bunsen first pointed out the order in which they were intended to hang; to whose dissertation we must refer our readers for want of space.* They formed two series, one representing the Founding of the Church after the Resurrection, the other the History of the Apostolic Church after the Ascension. The designs for the tapestries were allowed to remain in the hands of the Flemish weavers, from whose descendants Charles I. bought them. After his death they were put up for sale, and bought by Cromwell, who, however, does not appear to have thought it worth while to have them properly preserved, for on the accession of William III. they were found in a chest, in the strips into which they had been cut for the use of the weavers.

Bramante having died in 1514, Raffaele, by the last wish of the architect, added to all his other important commissions, that of the post of architect to S. Peter's. His plan, made for Leo X., and approved by him, was a Latin cross, crowned by a

* 'Life of Michael Angelo,' by John S. Harford, vol. ii. p. 240.

cupola. Two architects worked under him ; and he had a special brief from the Pope, allowing him to take marbles from the ancient buildings of the city. He was much interested in the preservation of the monuments of ancient Rome, and a letter of his to Leo X. on the subject is preserved. Many beautiful houses were also, according to Vasari, built from Raffaele's plans ; and indeed, work so crowded in on him, that, enormous as was the amount he did, he was obliged to refuse many commissions. Among the works of this period are the S. Michael of the Louvre (1517), S. Margaret and the Dragon, a celebrated portrait of Leo X. and two cardinals, in the Pitti Palace at Florence, his last and most famous Madonna, now in the Dresden Gallery, the Madonna San Sisto (1518), and the Transfiguration,* left unfinished at his death. While conducting the researches in the ruins, in the April of 1520, he was sent for by the Pope one day, and, going hastily to wait on him after great heat and fatigue, was kept waiting in a cold ante-chamber. He went home, and was seized with a fever, which ended fatally in a few days. Knowing that the end was come, he made his will, leaving, with his characteristic delicate thought-

* Oxford studies, Nos. 137-142.

fulness, his beautiful house to Cardinal Bibbiena, who was in difficulties, and could not afford a palace at Rome. He died on the night of his thirty-seventh birthday.

Great was the sorrow in Rome when the news spread that Raffaelle was no more. None had dreamed that the brilliant life, so full of energy and power and genius, which had been so endeared to everyone, was to close so suddenly. His beauty and grace, his lovable character, and his brilliant genius, had fascinated all with whom he came in contact; and when death closed so swiftly over the fair young life, it seemed as though the light had gone out of Rome. "It seems to me that I am no longer in Rome," wrote Count Baldassare to his mother, "since my poor dear Raffaelle is no more." They laid him in state in his house, that all might look once more on the sweet dead face of the young painter; his last work, the Transfiguration, being hung over his head. He was buried in his chosen resting-place, the Church of the Pantheon, near his betrothed, who had died before him.*

* Some years ago, a doubt having been thrown on the place of his burial, search was made, and the remains of the perfectly formed head and limbs left no doubt on the subject. They were replaced in a splendid sarcophagus, presented by the present Pope.

It remains for us to consider briefly the aim and the result of Raffaele's work. For long before his time, the pursuit of physical beauty for its own sake, had been gradually attracting the artists of the fifteenth century; and, side by side with this tendency, there grew up an ambition to produce skilled imitation of nature, rather than the intelligent interpretation of it, which brought scorn on those simplicities of faith, and conventionalities of representation, which had hitherto guided art. The enthusiasm for classic literature which had now reached its culminating point, gave an impulse to the new powers which art had developed, and the faculties of mind and hand which had hitherto been devoted to the interests of the Christian faith, were employed in the service of sensuous pleasure. The whole aim and purpose of religious art was thus transformed; and that gifted class who had hitherto regarded themselves as inspired, beyond their fellows, to teach and explain the Gospel of Christ to ignorant men, now became the devotees of pagan fiction, and the ministers of the fancies of the wealthy. The change, in itself, from conventionality to realism—that is, from less to more advanced knowledge—might have been unmixed good, instead of the nearly unmixed evil which it became, had science and learning been employed in

the service of truth and not of falsehood. But the new era of art had dawned on a worn-out civilisation and an extinct faith, and there remained no honest convictions on any point whatever, connected with the highest interests of mankind, on which to found a school. There has never existed a vital school of art in any age or country, which has not had for its first and greatest object, the expression of faith in a religious system around which the people have, in some sort, clung. But in the unreality and hollowness of a religion under the outward shell of which, Italy of the fifteenth century hid a recklessness of law and morals which defied the best instincts of humanity, there was nothing left which art could inspire. There remained indeed the possibility of founding a school of secular historical painting, but the sources of art were so polluted and the fundamental laws of beauty so forgotten, and the necessity of real thought was so ignored, that this too died away, after Raffaelle's death, in extravagance of dramatic contortions.

Raffaelle claimed to set before the world, representations of historical facts from the Gospel narrative, in place of the half mystical, half symbolic pictures of Christian art. And the world seems to have accepted the assumption that he did so, ever since, if we may judge by the unquestioned position which the Car-

toons have maintained in popular estimation, however little the pleasure people derive from contemplating them. There is indeed intellectual thought in the Cartoons, though perhaps that is precisely the point which the English mind usually misses. In the picture of S. Paul at Athens, we see the accuracy of Raffaelle's historical knowledge, in the characters of the different philosophers; the stolidity of the Cynic, the sneer of the Epicurean, the thoughtful attention of the Platonist. We know that S. Paul is preaching that doctrine of the Resurrection which was to the Greeks foolishness, and we see that his eloquence has convinced Dionysius, on whose face the light has dawned; but is there any comprehension of the grandeur of that scene on the hill of Mars, when first on the sacred spot of the great Greek race was proclaimed the Gospel of Christ?—any sympathy with the enthusiasm of the great Apostle, as standing on that spot, there must have swept across his mind a fresh conviction of the greatness of his mission?—any sense even of the grandeur of the Resurrection doctrine, then first falling on the astonished ears of that frivolous, cultivated generation? The most that Raffaelle can tell us about it is—significant thought—that the philosophers mocked. But, that we may see yet more clearly wherein Raffaelle's failure lay, let us turn to that thrilling

story of the risen life of our Lord, the meeting on the Galilean lake, when the morning—that glorious morning—having now come, “Jesus stood on the shore”—represented in the Cartoon of the Charge to S. Peter. Think of that touching scene when the Apostle who had denied his Master struggled, half naked, to land, in his first impetuous impulse to win some word of forgiveness—think of the dim solemnity which pervaded that strange unearthly meal on the solitary shore—the tender speech, the loving command to the pardoned one, the mystic, farewell allusions to the future in which He should no longer be their Companion—and then look at the affectations and falsehoods of Raffaele’s so-called ‘historical representation.’ Seven only of the Apostles saw the Lord that day; Raffaele has put eleven, in order to show that Christ intended the supremacy of S. Peter to be recognised by the whole Church, and the charge, “Feed my sheep,” to mean the foundation of the Papal supremacy. The bleak winter landscape and lonely shore are changed into sunny Italian scenery; the “fire of coals” not there at all; the fisher garments superseded by impossible and ridiculous costumes; the fictitious keys gracefully accepted by S. Peter. Could anything be more false in teaching and in fact from beginning to

end? * We feel that that last wonderful chapter of S. John has been for ever vulgarised.

In the first chamber which Raffaelle decorated in the Vatican, said Professor Ruskin, in his lecture on Pre-Raffaelitism, "he wrote upon its walls the *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* of the Art of Christianity. And he wrote it thus: on one wall of that chamber he placed a picture of the World or Kingdom of *Theology*, presided over by Christ; and on the side wall of that same chamber he placed the World or Kingdom of *Poetry* presided over by Apollo. And from that spot and from that hour, the intellect and the art of Italy date their degradation." The very perfection of execution which Raffaelle attained was the means of his deeper fall, for that which could be done so matchlessly, it became a temptation to do for its own sake, and as an aim and object; and then the downfall was rapid and the punishment sure; and the very beauty which was so worshipped, became as a mirage in the desert, receding as men grasped at it.

Such was the result of the art which pursued physical beauty and pure intellect for their own sakes. We have yet to see Michael Angelo's solution of the problem.

* See 'Modern Painters,' vol. iii. part iv. ch. iv. p. 53; on the false ideal.

WORKS BY RAFFAELLE IN BRITISH GALLERIES

- National Gallery* 1. Vision of a knight. 2. S. Katherine. 3. Julius II. 4. Virgin, Child, and S. John.
- Windsor Castle* Collection of drawings.
- Christ Church, Oxford* Fragment of the cartoon for the 'Murder of the Innocents.'
- Oxford Gallery* Collection of framed drawings.
- Panshanger* Two Madonnas.
- Bridgewater Gallery* 1. Madonna of the Palm-tree. 2, 3, and 4. Madonna and Child.
- Lord Ward* 1. Crucifixion. 2. Three Graces.
- Lord Garvagh* Virgin, Child, and S. John.
- Grosvenor Gallery* Virgin, Child, and S. John.
- Blenheim* 1. Portrait. 2. Madonna of the Baldacchino.
- Bowood* Predella of the Blenheim picture.
- Leigh Court* 1. Christ bearing the Cross. 2. Virgin and Child. 3. Julius II.
- Barron Hill* Pietà.
- Holkham* Drawing for 'La Belle Jardinière.'
- Lord Yarborough* Portrait.
- Mr. Barker* Virgin, Child, and S. John.
- Sion House* Virgin and Child.
- Kensington Museum* The Cartoons for the Sistine Chapel tapestries.

CHAPTER XIII.

MICHAEL ANGELO.—I.

Born 1474. Died 1564.

THERE are men who seem, as they stand out in history, to belong to all time, rather than to an age, a race, or a country ; whose names, as we take them on our lips, are sufficient to recall to our minds the greatness of an entire era. Such, to art, are Phidias of the dim, unknown past, and Dante of the central age of Christendom ; such is Michael Angelo Buonarrotti. Yet Michael Angelo was essentially a Florentine in the mould of his mind and character ; formed by, and thoroughly imbued with the literature of his race, and trained by its singularly perfect culture. That culture, developing through two centuries or gradually increasing perfection, the genius and character of the grand old Etruscan race, had so elevated also its physical character, as to have endowed body as well as mind, with a dignity and

elegance, which made the conditions of ordinary life, in Florence, a 'School of Art' such as the world has seldom seen. Beauty of climate and of scenery, of form and colour, glory of dome, and bell-tower, and spire, faultlessness of human face and form, combined to make Florence of the fifteenth century a fair vision of beauty, such as we love to dream of in the dimmed loveliness, and amidst the mouldering treasures of Florence of to-day, which is to us a precious link between mediæval and modern history.

Michael Angelo was born but ten years after the death of the great architect of the dome of Florence, who, it is said, first inspired Cosmo de' Medici to collect those statues of antiquity, which formed so chief a characteristic of the celebrated Medici Gardens, and who himself discovered and repaired many.

The Buonarrotti cherished the proud belief that imperial blood ran in their veins through the Countess Beatrice, sister of Henry II. They were, at any rate, descended from the counts of Canossa, and, though poor at the period of which we are writing, were among the aristocratic families of Florence. In 1474, Ludovico Buonarrotti, having been made governor of Chiusi-e-Caprese, near Arezzo, made a rapid journey thither with his young wife; and there, immediately on their arrival, was born their first child, christened

Michael Agnolo. When they returned to Florence, in 1476, on the expiration of Ludovico's term of office, they entrusted the child to the care of his nurse, a stonemason's wife, at Settignano, a village close to Florence, whence in after years Michael Angelo used to say that it was no wonder he loved his chisel so well, since he had imbibed his passion for sculpture with his nurse's milk. He was intended by his father to be a scholar, and was therefore sent to school; but, like the young Cimabue, he spent all his time in drawing, or in slipping away to the artists' ateliers. Persuasion and harshness were in vain tried by turns, to break the boy's purpose to be an artist; and at last, weary of the useless contention, Ludovico apprenticed him to Dominico Ghirlandajo, in the spring of 1488. Michael Angelo appeared in his studio at a happy moment, for he had just received the commission to re-paint a wall of S. Maria Novella, which had been occupied by a work of Orcagna's, at that time so faded and injured by the leaking of the roof, as to be past restoration. There Ghirlandajo's painting still remains; and, beyond the many interests which circle round his paintings of the poets and philosophers and beauties of that famous age, not the least one centres in the parts which tradition points out as the first efforts of the young apprentice. "He understands more of drawing than

I do myself," said the astonished master, on seeing a sketch made by the boy one day, of the scaffolding and workmen in the church. One is sorry to have to record that Ghirlandajo's jealousy of his young pupil overcame his better feelings, and it became necessary to dissolve the contract before its full conclusion.*

While in Ghirlandajo's atelier, Michael Angelo had, however, gained two important things : the friendship of the young Granacci, his fellow-pupil, who lent him drawings, and gave him all the sympathy and help in his power ; and the admittance to the Medici Gardens. A new world was opened on the boy, as he here beheld, for the first time, the magnificence of Greek art ; and a new vista of possibilities dawned upon him as the inspiration flashed on him to be a sculptor. One of the first things which strike one in studying Michael Angelo's life, is the suddenness with which his powers seemed to leap into maturity. We see not, can hardly imagine, his boyhood and dawning manhood ; nor can we trace, as in Raffaello and others, the gradual processes of his intellect with regard to the great problems of art in that transitory age. He seems to have stood face to face with the great Greek school, and, once for all, to have

* So Condivi, Michael Angelo's biographer, affirms. Vasari contradicts it, but his jealousy of the superior right of Condivi to compile the history of Michael Angelo is notorious.

accepted its matchless technical perfection as the chief aim of art, without hesitation or reserve.

Wonderful stories are told by Vasari of Michael Angelo's copies of the early masters at this time, so perfect as to be often undistinguishable from the originals; but it was the sculpture which absorbed his chief interest. He made friends with the masons, watched them at their work, and at last procured from them a piece of marble, in which he copied an antique Faun so well, that Lorenzo, ever on the watch to encourage genius, noticed him, and, perceiving the boy's singular promise, sent for his father. Very loth to go on an errand of which he knew the result, was the proud old Ludovico; and he at first declined to obey the summons. But Lorenzo was not to be refused, and it was at last agreed that the young Michael Angelo should be taken into Lorenzo's palace, and provided with a room, a place at his table, and an allowance of five ducats a month. In the Buonarrotti Palace is still a bas-relief representing Hercules fighting with the Centaurs, which was executed at the suggestion of Politian, and which Michael Angelo kept, in loving memory of these happy early days. In those few pleasant years (Lorenzo died in 1492) he devoted himself, unembarrassed by cares of any kind, to the study of

classical sculpture, of the frescoes—still the school of young painters—of Masaccio in the Carmine Church, and to literature, some knowledge of which was essential to those who mixed day by day in the polished circle of Lorenzo's court. To the young artist, the death of Lorenzo must have been a first real sorrow, for, tyrant and profligate though he might be, he was a kind friend and generous patron. Michael Angelo seems to have left the palace immediately after Lorenzo's death, and lived for the next two years at home, quietly pursuing his work. Of the influences which gathered round his life and matured his character in those two momentous years of his dawning manhood, we know nothing. We may well believe that his serious and melancholy temperament was profoundly impressed by the terrible warnings and prophecies by which Savonarola, then at the height of his power, was striking awe into the hearts of the citizens of Florence. The weak and infatuated Picro de' Medici was hastening the ruin of the city by every means in his power ; he and his court feasting, hunting, and merry-making, careless of danger, and incredulous of invasion ; while day by day Savonarola thundered forth his unheeded denunciations, and men's minds were wrought up to expectation of some terrible, heaven-sent calamity. One day, there came

to Michael Angelo, Piero's lute-player, saying that the dead Lorenzo had appeared to him in tattered garments, and commanded him tell his son that he would be soon driven away from Florence, never more to return. Michael Angelo bade the man tell his master, but he feared to do so. Again the vision came—this time with a menacing aspect; and again Michael Angelo urged the terrified man to warn his master. He did so, and was treated with the contempt and ridicule of the court. Then Michael Angelo believed that the end was come, and the decree of heaven gone forth against the godless court, and, dismayed and terror-struck, fled secretly from the city, finding a temporary resting-place in the hospitable house of Aldovrino, a patrician of Bologna. There, in a few days, he was followed by Piero de' Medici; the prophecy fulfilled, and he an exile from Florence, fleeing from before the army of the king of France. At this time was done Michael Angelo's well-known and beautiful work of the figures for S. Dominic's tomb,* of which the angel holding the candelabrum is perhaps the one of all his works which we contemplate with the most unmixed pleasure, as of real spiritual beauty. In Bologna he might have

* Niccolo Pisano's work.

stayed longer, away from the turmoil and wretched strife of distracted Florence, pursuing his peaceful studies by day, and delighting his host in the evenings, with his recitations of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio,* but for the jealousy of the Bolognese artists, which forced him to leave the city at the close of his work there. He returned to Florence to find many changes. The beautiful palace and gardens, where he had lived and studied—the pride of Florence—were laid waste, the art-treasures sold and scattered, and many of them probably destroyed by Savonarola's party, who now held the reins of government. Two of the brightest ornaments of the Medicean court, Politian and Pica della Mirandola, had gone to their rest, desiring to be buried in the dress of Savonarola's order. All through that Lent of 1496—the Lent of the Great Bonfire—Savonarola thundered forth his appeals for repentance and reform; and we know that Michael Angelo was among his adherents at that critical time. One would be glad to gain some idea of the effect which the great reformer produced on his life and mind, and with what thoughts he regarded this period of Savonarola's career, and the almost fanatic destruc-

* Roscoe's 'Leo X.' vol. ii. chap. xxii. p. 397.

tion which he enjoined, of those treasures of classical art which had been Michael Angelo's school. It is probable that he kept himself out of the immediate strife, calming and balancing his mind by practical work and study. We may well believe, however, that it was Savonarola who planted the germ of that deep personal religion which was so marked a feature in his character, gradually prevailing over the Platonism of his earlier years, and shining out clearer and calmer as old age and death approached. We know, at any rate, that Savonarola's writings were among his chosen studies, that he cherished his memory ever with affection, and used to speak often of that thrilling voice, whose sweetness and strength had rung so mightily through Florence.

In the June of 1496, Michael Angelo made his first visit to Rome. A Cupid had been executed by him in that year, and sent to Rome to be sold, having been previously buried in the ground to give it the appearance of an antique. It seems doubtful whether Michael Angelo was a party to this trick,* which Lorenzo de' Medici, cousin to the banished Piero, appears to have originated. Michael Angelo

* Mr. Harford believes that he was not. See 'Life of Michael Angelo.'

was the soul of honour, and is most unlikely to have done such a thing for mere gain ; but he might have wanted to test his work and the acuteness of the Roman critics. However it may be, the purchaser, Cardinal San Giorgio, was completely deceived, and paid two hundred ducats for it, only thirty of which the negotiator sent to Michael Angelo. The cardinal, discovering at last the fraud, sent an ambassador to Florence to inquire into it, and to find the sculptor who was capable of such workmanship. When Michael Angelo, with all the other sculptors, visited the ambassador, he brought no drawings with him, but, like Giotto, took a pen, and drew with it a human hand. Thus it was, attracted by the promises of the nobleman, and in hopes of getting some of his money from the seller of his Cupid, that Michael Angelo set out on his first journey to Rome, and began his career there at the age of twenty-one.

Thrown thus early into the centre of the most licentious city in Europe, infidelity and vice reigning triumphant on the throne of the chief Bishop of the Christian Church, religious art made subservient to the luxury or pride of prelates, what was the effect of Rome on Michael Angelo? That he was not contaminated, as Raffaele, by the worldliness, and

dazzled by the superficial cultivation there, we know ; that his lofty soul formed and kept a standard of faith and morals, which all the corruptions of those professing to be God's representatives on earth were insufficient to shake, we know also. But that the overwhelming greatness of the social evils which made Rome what it was in that age, did warp his mind and embitter his soul ; that the contemplation of these things filled his work with feverish restlessness, and negatived his power for good by causing him to dwell morbidly on the unfathomable mystery of evil—there can be no doubt. His first work in Rome, and the one which secured his reputation as a sculptor, was the well-known '*Pietà*,'* now in a side-chapel of S. Peter's, but originally intended, it is said, for the Abbey of S. Denis. The traditions of mediæval art still lingered in his mind as he carved the delicate features on which death has set the seal of perfect repose, and restrained reverently his power of realism in the dignified grief of the Virgin Mother. "The love and care," says Vasari, "which Michael Angelo had given to this group, were such that he there left his name—a thing he

* Executed in 1499, for the Cardinal S. Denis, or, according to Bottari, for the Cardinal de Villiers.

never did again for any work—on the cincture which girdles the robe of our Lady.” All Rome came to criticise and admire the new and unrivalled effort at sculpture; but the only fault that could be suggested was that “the Virgin was too young.” “Do you not know,” answered the young sculptor, “that pure women remain fresher than those who are not so? How much more, then, a Virgin who has never been led astray by the least sinful desire? But yet more; we must believe that the Divine Power came also to her aid, so that the imperishable purity of the Mother of God might appear to all the world.” It throws an additional interest over this noble work, to remember that it was done in the year of Savonarola’s trial and death, and that its pathos may have been deepened by the thoughts which saddened his soul, as he mourned, with all true Florentines, the fate of the martyr-leader. When family affairs took Michael Angelo to Florence, shortly after the completion of this work, the voice of the great reformer was silent in death, and his enemies ruled in the city, their supremacy typified by the chasing of a horse, in mockery, through Arnolfo’s beautiful Cathedral. After working in Florence for some months, he received the commission for the celebrated statue of

David, from the trustees of the cathedral. Many years before, an immense block of marble, eighteen feet in height, had been brought from Carrara, for the purpose of making a statue for the dome; but all the sculptors had refused the difficult task, and the marble had stood unused. At the time of Michael Angelo's visit to Florence, a sculptor had offered to attempt the work, and a competition had arisen, when it was found that Michael Angelo was the only man who would undertake to use the entire block as it stood, without either adding to or taking from it; and the commission was accordingly given to him, with an allowance of six gold florins a month. The little wax model, which was his only guide, is still to be seen in the Uffizi Gallery. About this time is supposed to have been painted the only easel-picture known to be by his hand: it is a Holy Family, and is now in the Uffizi Gallery. A story is told of it, showing Michael Angelo's uncompromising character. He desired the messenger who took the picture to its owner, a Florentine citizen, to wait for the money. Half the required sum came back, and Michael Angelo at once demanded double the original price, or the picture. It seems necessary to make some mention here of that celebrated picture of the Fates—that wonderful trans-

lation of the terrible symbol of heathen mythology into a Christian thought—the print of which has made it so familiar in England, and concerning which so much discussion has taken place. It is, almost unquestionably, Michael Angelo's design; but whether painted by him, is a matter of great doubt. Harford and Kügler both attribute it to Rosso Fiorentino, an almost unknown painter, and we believe that Professor Ruskin is very doubtful of its authenticity; but Mr. Tyrwhitt contends that it is entirely Michael Angelo's. "Three mighty spinning women; aged beyond their years; wrinkled, but not withered; stronger than men, or the children of men; awful rather than terrible. One stands a little behind: it is she who metes out the length of the thread of life; and her task is over, the appointed span is all past. Her mouth is open, calling the name by which immortals know the soul whose hour is come. There is a trace of suspense and pain in her expression. She who spins has turned her face from the thread, her work too being done; and her eyes meet those of the fury with the abhorred shears. The latter is no fiend or hateful Erinny in the mind of Buonarrotti; both the sisters have a far-away look of strange pity; so distant and so faint, it reminds one no more of human

tenderness than the evening Alpengluth recalls the sun's warmth. Yet it is there; and with it the lips are just moved in the dawn of a strange smile, as if to say: They who mourn unknowing shall yet understand. And the thread is between the shears; and the sinews of the strong, fleshless hand are set, and it is closing them slowly; and still the grave eyes seek the sister's face expressionless, impenetrable, irrefragable. 'I am all that has been, and is, and shall be; and no man hath ever lifted my veil,' said the statue of Isis. It is as if Michael Angelo had indeed raised it, and looked steadily on what it covered." *

For two years, Michael Angelo worked almost incessantly at his great statue of David, often even sleeping with his clothes on, in order that he might rise early; and in the April of 1504 it was finished. The uncovering of a great work of art was still, as in old times, an event in which the whole city had share and interest; and in this instance, a full and curious record remains of the discussion which took place concerning its destination, giving us a vivid glimpse of Florentine life at that period. There

* 'Christian Art and Symbolism,' Rev. R. St. John Tyrwhitt, lect. iv. p. 137.

were the Gonfaloniere, the council, the officials and magistrates of the city, and all the leading artists, many of whose names are familiar to us ; Perugino, Sandro Botticelli, Granacci, Lorenzo di Credi, Filippino Lippi, Leonardo da Vinci, Cronaca, who devised the machinery which moved it, and many others. After much discussion, it was agreed that the artist himself should choose its resting-place ; and Michael Angelo decided that it should stand at the entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio. The progress of the gigantic statue occupied some days ; but on May 18th, at early dawn, it was safely deposited in its place in the Piazza. In this same year, Michael Angelo obtained the commission for the cartoon which was to occupy the wall of the great council-chamber, opposite to that for which Leonardo da Vinci had painted his great picture. The subject Michael Angelo chose was that of the surprise of the Florentine army by the Pisans while bathing ; and it is generally called the 'Cartoon of the Bathers.' It was never finished, and the work was destroyed during his lifetime. These two, now perished works, became at once and thenceforth, to the Florentine artists, all that the frescoes of Masaccio had hitherto been, so that Benvenuto Cellini, the sculptor, called them the 'School of the World ;' and it was the

desire to see and study these great works, which brought Raffaele to Florence in that same year, and their influence which made the first fatal change in his style. The consummation and the fall of painting lay in that cartoon of Michael Angelo's. Henceforth, anatomy became the highest aim, and the posturing of the human form the ultimate ambition of artists. Those who copied him saw only the scientific knowledge, in which they vainly thought his greatness lay, and imitated the fatal mannerisms, thinking that it was only the skill which was needed, to make them too Michael Angelos.

While still at this work in the council-chamber, Michael Angelo was summoned to Rome by Julius II. He went there in the beginning of the year 1505, and received the order for the colossal monument of Julius, the completion of which spread over his whole life, and of which Condivi, his biographer, writes as the Tragedy of the Sepulchre, because of the trouble and distress its completion caused him. The proud soldier Pope, whose chief object was the aggrandisement of the power of the Roman See in his own person, determined that his monument should be in the most conspicuous place of the tribune of S. Peter's; and Michael Angelo was commissioned, assisted by San Gallo the architect, to continue the

new building, the foundations of which had been laid by Nicholas V., for its reception. As the building progressed, the idea of rebuilding the entire Basilica gradually matured, and Bramante was ordered to prepare designs, which were accepted, and which, though more or less departed from by his successors, formed the main plan of S. Peter's as we see it at this day. It is a strong proof that Michael Angelo was above the jealousy of other artists so often attributed to him, that, cordially as he disliked and despised the mean-spirited and selfish Bramante, and deeply as he was injured by his intrigues, he refused to permit any material alteration of Bramante's plan when his own turn came to be architect of S. Peter's, saying that "Whoever departed from Bramante's plan, deviated from the truth." Had this plan been adhered to, and the Cathedral built in the form of an equilateral instead of a Latin cross, the magnificent dome would not have been dwarfed as it now is by the length of the nave.

In the spring, Michael Angelo set out for Carrara, where he spent eight months, superintending the cutting of the marble, rough-hewing figures to be transported to Rome, and anxiously preparing for the safety of his blocks. In 1506 he was again in Rome, awaiting their arrival, and preparing his studio

outside S. Peter's. It would seem, however, that he had returned before the end of 1505, since it is recorded by San Gallo's son that he was present at the discovery of the celebrated Laocoon;* but he returned to Carrara in May, where he had much trouble and anxiety about his marble. Meanwhile Bramante had succeeded both in undermining Michael Angelo's influence with the Pope, and in persuading him to abandon the idea of the monument—working on the old man's fear of death, by telling him that it was an ill omen to build his own monument. So, when Michael Angelo returned in the summer, he could get neither money nor orders from the Pope, who even refused to see him, and left him with the unpaid workmen and marbles on his hands. But Michael Angelo would brook insult from no man, and wrote a brief note to the Pope, telling him that if he wanted him, he must seek him elsewhere than in Rome; and, mounting his horse, rode off to Florence—the Pope's emissaries close after him, commanding his return. Michael Angelo was immovable, however; he would not return, "now nor ever," he said, "since the Pope no longer wanted his services;" and he went on quietly

* 'Quarterly Review,' April 1858. Article on Michael Angelo.

with his cartoon in the council-chamber. Three successive letters the Pope wrote to the Gonfaloniere of Florence, demanding that Michael Angelo should be sent back, he threatening to leave Italy altogether if force were put on him. The Gonfaloniere protected him by every means in his power, procuring for him a safe-conduct, and investing him with the honorary dignity of ambassador; and at last, representing to him that the fiery Pope would probably make war on Florence if he could not have his way, persuaded Michael Angelo to repair to Bologna, whither the Pope had just made a military expedition. Fortunately for him, perhaps, when he presented himself somewhat proudly before the Pope, a well-intentioned bishop made excuse for his manners, saying that artists were ignorant men, and knew little beyond their profession. "Get out of my sight!" exclaimed the irascible Pope. "Do you dare to say things of this man, which I would not have said of him myself?" And Michael Angelo was received back into favour at once.

The monument, however, was consigned to oblivion for the present; and Julius, by way of finding occupation for Michael Angelo, ordered him to make a bronze statue of himself, to be erected in the porch of San Petronius at Bologna. Amongst the corre-

spondence in the British Museum, is a letter written home at this time, in which we incidentally see how entirely he had become the mainstay of his family, both for advice and pecuniary needs. He lived most sparingly himself, giving much away, and sending all he could save to Florence, for the benefit of his family. They must pray God, is the request repeated in many letters, that all his work may have good success. He had much disappointment and trouble over the cast for Julius's statue, not being experienced in such work. "It gave me no rest, night or day," he says in one of his letters; and at last he was obliged to procure the assistance of the inspector of the iron-works at Florence, with whose help he at last completed a successful cast, and after a year's hard work it was finished. Julius was asked what he would have placed in his left hand. "Give me a sword," said the soldier Pope; "I am no scholar. And what does the raised right hand denote?" asked Julius. "You are advising the people of Bologna to be wise," answered Michael Angelo, with one of those covert sarcasms so characteristic of him. The statue was unveiled in the February of 1508, with great festivities and apparent rejoicings. No sword was in the Pope's hand, but the keys of S. Peter; a reproof which Julius might have done

well to take to heart. Three years afterwards, this statue of the detested invader of their liberties was thrown down by the Bolognese, and the precious work of a year of the great master's prime, destroyed by an infuriated mob.

It was in the period of Michael Angelo's short visit to Florence, after the completion of this statue, that his final quarrel with Perugino took place, which is said to have been the cause of the latter's leaving Florence. Accounts differ as to the degree of blame attached to Michael Angelo ; but it seems probable that Perugino spoke depreciatingly of the former's work, and got for his answer, that he was an ignorant person. Perugino foolishly tried to get legal satisfaction ; but the case was dismissed, and he only brought discredit on himself. The profound reality and seriousness of Michael Angelo's character made him incapable of brooking patiently the petty jealousies and narrow conceits of other and smaller men ; and when they troubled him, he answered them in the bitterness of his soul—hurting, no doubt, often, more than he intended. He was, however, intensely gentle and tender, peculiarly sensitive to kindness or unkindness, and always ready to help others with advice or sympathy, feeling, when his temper was not roused, the distress which only such a nature can feel,

when obliged to hurt others' feelings. His character is written on his face, known well to most of us—the grand outline of head and features as portrayed in the picture which has come down to us, never to be forgotten, despite the marring of its beauty by the disfigurement * which may have added to his morbidness, and but for which, the face would have been as handsome as it is striking. Through the cloud of profound melancholy which rests on it, and beneath the deep lines of power and of passion which seam it, there gleams an expression of infinite tenderness, such as his life does not belie. Spirits at once so tender and so strong fare ill in this rough world, and are only known when they have passed beyond its praise or blame, and their hearts are stilled to its tumult.

It may be well that we should pause here to consider briefly the leading features of that great revolution in art, which we call the Renaissance, and the

* While studying in the Medici Gardens, he had a quarrel with a fellow-student called Torrigiano, who gave him a blow which broke his nose, and nearly killed him. This same Torrigiano, who was obliged to flee from Florence in consequence, eventually found his way to England, where he gave an impetus to the Renaissance. He was the architect who built Henry VII.'s monument at Westminster, and probably that also of Margaret of Richmond, Henry's mother. See Lübke's '*History of Sculpture*,' Miss Bunnett's translation, vol. ii. ch. ii. part ii. p. 334.

moral and spiritual relations of which to the age, we have already glanced at.

When art had produced such a perfect balance of knowledge, executive power, and imaginative thought, as was attained by John Bellini, Ghiberti, Perugino, and Botticelli, in painting and sculpture, and as was exemplified in architecture, in the matchless Gothic of Venice and of Florence, it had reached its highest perfection. With the new learning and paganised religion, other requirements and far different sympathies arose; and henceforth, scientific knowledge which should rival the ancient schools became the passion, and technical accuracy, possible only in its perfection to petrified thought, the end of art. The intellectual power of the age was on the side of the movement, reactionary as it was against religion, under the false form of the Roman supremacy; and thus it became animated with a temporary life, and great minds, such as Michael Angelo, were the leaders in a reaction which brought swift destruction to the arts of Italy.

The results of the Renaissance in painting, we have already seen exemplified in Raffaello. Anatomy, perspective, chiaro-scuro, scientific excellence of all kinds, became the standard of criticism. Science was to be almost synonymous with art, and the one

was thought useless and contemptible unless perfected by the other. Raffaele, the representative painter of the Renaissance age, who gave himself up unresistingly to its spirit, painted bones, flesh, and muscles, as they never had been painted before; made external nature the sole aim of his painting, and delivered up his whole mind to the attaining of perfection in its representation. He gave in exchange for the dexterity he won, the power to see the spirit which burns through the veil of our mortality, the gift to sympathise with weakness, and the love to discern the purity which is better than strength, and the self-restrained repose which is nobler than passionate effort. Art and grammar must alike be faultless now. Cardinal Bembo will banish the Bible from its library, for fear its language should corrupt his taste; and Perugino, Pinturicchio, and Ghirlandajo shall have their works obliterated, and themselves consigned to oblivion, to make way for the new lights of the world.

Architecture fared yet worse by the revolution. In rejecting the noble forms of Gothic, the Renaissance architects fell back, of necessity, upon the style of classic Rome, retaining only the magnificent mediæval feature of the dome and vaulted roof, but substituting for the arch, which formed so grand a

feature of the old Romanesque, the square doorway with horizontal plinth. Grand, colossal, and cold, rose up the new style—fit for the luxury of princes and the pride of Popes. No human thought on its blank walls for men to ponder on as they passed to and fro ; no quaint conceits to move their sympathies ; no carven niche for sweet saintly face to look down from and touch their hearts. The science of the Renaissance builders remains their monument to this day. How much do we thank them for it ? Had they left us the record of their thoughts, however confused ; of their feelings, however passionate ; we should approach their work reverently, as we do that of the wild Lombard conquerors of Val d'Arno. Not by what we know, but by what out of our measure of knowledge we have woven in thought and experience, do men value us. Other generations will know more than we do, stand in relation to us as we do to those before us ; but the pure thoughts and noble experience, which each true soul, standing in its place, sends flowing on to the great fountain of mutual help and sympathy, can never cease to live or fail to help. “ ‘ Indeed,’ men will say, ‘ they felt that in their day, saw that ? Would God we may be like them, before we go to the home where sight and thought are not.’ ” This, the Renaissance, with its corrupted morality

and hollow religion, failed to do for its generation. This, Michael Angelo, uniting the faith and spirit of the mighty artists of old, to the science of his age, strove with all his soul, sorrowfully, and in doubt and dimness, to do ; and became, with all his faults and mistakes, one of their great, immortal brotherhood.

CHAPTER XIV.

MICHAEL ANGELO.—II.

WE return to Michael Angelo, at that period of his life and work which is most universally known. Before he could complete the cartoon in the council-chamber at Florence, he was summoned to Rome (1508); and—with far different feelings than when, twelve years before, he had started in the dawn of youth and hope, to try his fortune as an unknown adventurer—he obeyed the summons. The monument, his cherished design and first great work, was consigned to oblivion, and he was very sorrowful over the waste of life and energy which it had involved. He was not much comforted by finding, on his arrival in Rome, that the Pope had conceived the idea of covering the vault of the Sistine Chapel with painting, and that it was to execute this work for which he had been sent. He asked for some

different commission, told the Pope he was not a painter, and felt unequal to the task ; and, it is said, suggested that Raffaello should be substituted. But the Pope was determined that Michael Angelo, and no one else, should do the work ; and he was at last obliged to prepare designs for it.

Michael Angelo invented his own scaffolding, having refused to use Bramante's somewhat clumsy contrivance, on account of the holes which it made in the building. The idea is said to have been invaluable to the latter afterwards in building S. Peter's ; and the economy of rope was so great, that the carpenter to whom Michael Angelo gave it, was able to portion his two daughters with the profits. On commencing his difficult task, Michael Angelo sent for some of his artist friends from Florence ; but soon perceiving that their work was no help at all to him, he determined to get rid of them, the only difficulty being, how to devise it without hurting their feelings. One day, when they came to work, they found the chapel locked up and Michael Angelo disappeared ; and understanding the meaning of this characteristic action, they wisely took the hint, and went back to Florence, leaving Michael Angelo to his solitary work in peace. The burden of the work lay heavily on him, however, now that he was all alone ;

his first painting faded off from damp, and he was thoroughly inexperienced in the medium he had to work with. Money, of which he was sadly in want, could not be extracted from the Pope; and he was overtaxed with his laborious uncongenial work, and allowed himself neither sufficient rest nor food, urged on, and worried incessantly as he was, by the impatient Pope. With hard and constant work, half the ceiling was finished by the autumn, and Julius insisted that the scaffolding should come down, and the chapel be thrown open to the public. In vain Michael Angelo protested against, and threw obstacles in the way of this hindrance to the work which he was so anxious to complete. Julius was determined, and on November 1st, 1509, the wonderful painting was thrown open to the gaze of the astonished Romans. Nothing had been seen like it before. The heavy domed roof had melted away in aërial perspective, and it must have seemed to the beholders as they entered the gloom of the sombre chapel, that it was not a vault of stone which they beheld, but the vault of Heaven in its clearness, and the hosts that people it in their majesty. In the centre was the great Creator flying forth on the clouds of heaven in the "hiding of His power," scattering the everlasting mountains, cleaving the

earth with rivers ; the sun and moon standing still in their habitation "at the light of His glittering spear ;" the only approachably great conception recorded by mortal hand, of Him at Whose Vision the Prophet "trembled in himself that he might rest in the day of trouble." Not less wonderful in conception is the Act of Creation. Man on the mountain summit awaits the awful Gift of Life, which begins to burn within the still earth-bound figure, as the Almighty Father hovers over him, the sons of God shouting for joy around. Then came the Creation of Eve, the Fall, the Expulsion from Paradise, the Murder of Abel, and the Deluge ; and between, seated round the walls, as in brooding thought over the great mystery of human life through the ages, sit the awful, mighty figures of the Prophets and the Sibyls.

Looking at this great work now, cracked and dim and murky as it is—yet still, alone among the works of the mighty masters of Italy, undesecrated by the hand of the restorer—we may faintly imagine the sight which met the eyes of those who stayed, awe-struck, to gaze, that All Saints' Day three hundred years ago, on the spirit forms of the great cloud of witnesses which chain the Church Catholic in one.

In 1512, the whole work was finished ; but in consequence of Julius's haste to take down the

scaffolding, and throw open the chapel to the public, the gold lights had not been put on the dresses. The Pope was very anxious that the scaffolding should be re-erected, and this defect rectified ; but Michael Angelo had no mind to re-touch his work now that it was finished. "The figures look so poor," objected Julius. "They were poor people whom I have painted there," said Michael Angelo ; "they wore no gold on their garments."

In February 1513, Julius II. lay dying, and Florence was holding high festival at the restoration of the Medici, who had won their way back, between force and guile, to their native city. In March, Leo X., the Medicean, was elected Pope ; and the star of the Medici family was once more in the ascendancy, and the liberty of Florence, from that time, a doomed thing.

An elegant scholar and an accomplished man, like all his family, Leo X. was yet vastly inferior to his ancestors in power of mind ; and his court owes its brilliant reputation, rather to the constellation of learning and culture which gathered around this last great representative of the Medici family, than to his own powers of mind. He was, too, singularly devoid of that discernment and appreciation of genius which had been so remarkable in others of his race,

and allowed himself to be flattered into patronising Raffaele's party in Rome to the exclusion of Michael Angelo. There is no proof that the two artists ever had a quarrel ; and it is probable that they had no share in, and were nearly powerless to prevent, the intrigues which were carried on by the respective parties which rallied round them. But, no doubt, the exclusive patronage which Leo X. extended to Raffaele went far to inflame the ill-feeling on both sides ; and the two principal persons concerned would have been something more than human had they been altogether free from jealousy which their followers took such pains to instil into them.

To the long-delayed work, Julius's monument, then, Michael Angelo now betook himself, though with depressed and disappointed feelings ; for although Julius had charged his nephews to continue the work at his death, the original plan * was altered, and the scale considerably diminished, and all the blocks already prepared were of too large proportions for the new design.

In 1515, while at Carrara, excavating marble, a summons came to him from Rome. A façade was to

* The two chained youths, now in the Louvre, were prepared for the original monument.

be built for San Lorenzo, the family church of the Medici ; and all the great artists were summoned to Rome to compete for it. It was a common thing in Italy, to leave the principal end of a church unfinished, to be completed with a façade at some future time ; and many churches thus left remain to this day, striking the eye with their bare brick exteriors. Michael Angelo's design was chosen ; and he undertook the work on condition that he should be allowed to go on with the monument. The next few years were spent at Carrara, superintending the excavations, in weary disputes with the workmen, and attempts to open a new quarry ; all to end in the suspension of the order for the façade after much useless labour and expense, the burden of which fell upon himself. So the great master's prime was wasted, and his soul embittered, by the vanity and incapacity of his employers.

After this, Michael Angelo retired to Florence, where he went on with Julius's monument, and took up his position as one of the chief men of the city. It was at this time that the petition was sent to Rome, signed by the principal citizens, to request that the remains of Dante might be brought to Florence. "I, Michael Angelo, the sculptor," concludes the petition, "address the same request to

your Holiness, offering to raise the divine poet a worthy monument in this city." But Leo cared for none of this, nor for the memory of Dante, but was busy with schemes for his own immortality ; and no answer was sent. So the great Florentine lies still in his exiled grave among the marshes of Ravenna, more sacred than all the mausoleums of Rome ; and the cherished wish of the 'divine master,' to raise a fit memorial to the 'divine poet' of Italy, was unfulfilled.

When Leo X. died (December, 1521), the sun went down on the brilliant era inaugurated by Nicholas V. The measure of the iniquity of Papal Rome was nearly full ; and the Renaissance, with its elegant culture, and finished scholarship, its pride of wealth, and lust of power, was fast drawing to a close. Adrian IV., the simple, ignorant, pure-hearted man, who had been forced from his quiet episcopal work, by the Roman intrigues, into the Papal chair—who, in his horror at the pollutions of the den of iniquity in which he found himself, had walled up the picture-galleries, and desired to pull down the Sistine ceiling because of the naked figures painted there—died, worn out, after a year and a half. To him succeeded the Cardinal Medici, Clement VII., whose contemptible character and despicable conduct have

made his name execrated in history as the worst representative of an accursed race, and by whom was accomplished the ruin of Florence.

In 1524, Michael Angelo began the tombs of the Medici, which, with the chapel containing them, were to supersede the commission for the façade of San Lorenzo ; and after much worry, dispute, and waste of time, he was secured a salary of fifty ducats a month. The next few years were perhaps the most troublous of the great master's long and weary life. The family of Pope Julius made complaint for the second time, of the postponement of the work for the monument, which Michael Angelo would only have been too thankful to finish, if time and peace were given him.

In 1525 he was in Rome again, petitioning Clement to allow him to fulfil his contract ; but Clement, like the rest of the Popes, was perfectly indifferent to any claims but his own, and decided that the monument must wait for the present ; and Michael Angelo submitted in despair. The faction of artists against him, also, was now at its strongest under Clement, whose chief favourite was a painter named Bandinelli, a low-minded and vulgar man, who hated Michael Angelo, maligned and injured him on every opportunity, and on whose name rests the

suspicion of having destroyed Michael Angelo's cartoon in the council-chamber. This man intrigued for, and obtained, the commission to execute the statue of Hercules, which was to be placed on the opposite side of the porch to the David ; and there the wretched piece of work stands to this day, a disgrace to Florence. It is said that Michael Angelo felt this slight most keenly.

We must pass very briefly over the disastrous period of the fall of Rome and Florence. In January 1527, Charles V. crossed the Alps and marched on Rome. There, sunk in vice, enervated by luxury, and possessed by an infatuated sense of security, Popes and Cardinals scoffed at danger in their splendid palaces, and barely escaped captivity by entrenching themselves, at the last moment, in the Castle of S. Angelo. No one was ready for the enemy, and an almost bloodless victory was gained. There was one short day of useless resistance, and the sun set for ever on Rome as the capital of Christendom. Clement, selfish wretch that he was, might have saved the city by capitulation ; but, safe in his own castle, he refused to make terms with the Emperor, and would not attempt to prevent the sack and the massacre, of which he must almost have been an eye-witness. So, once more in the world's history

the night closed on a scene of rapine, slaughter, and licence in Rome, too terrible to contemplate ; and the German hordes, less merciful than their barbarian ancestors, inflamed by fanatical passion which gave zest to their deeds, spread, the scourge of God, over the doomed city. It was "as if the earth had opened and disgorged a legion of devils." The Lutheran fanatics had found their way at last into the centre of that Catholicism which Rome had so defiled, and they were maddened. They too, like the simple Northern tribes of centuries ago, had heard of the hoard of the wonderful city, and lusted for it ; ten million ducats, it is said, they took. Priceless works of art were destroyed ; the ancient statues which decorated the streets were thrown down ; the matchless windows of William of Marseilles broken in pieces ; the paintings or mosaics defaced or torn down ; the Vatican—that museum of the world—was plundered, and fires lighted on its precious mosaic floors ; churches and palaces turned into stables. In the National Gallery is a Holy Family painted by an artist named Parmigiano, which is historically interesting from the fact that it was painted at the time when these events were occurring in Rome. The soldiers burst into his studio, and found the artist where he was quietly painting ; and struck either by

his courage, or charmed with some quality in the picture, such as their uneducated eyes were not accustomed to see, left his studio untouched and himself unhurt.

In the awfulness of the calamity which had fallen on Rome, there was kindled in the Florentine people a spark of their ancient greatness; they knew that their turn would come next, and prepared to die fighting in defence of their freedom. The Medici were expelled from the city, a Gonfaloniere elected, the people assembled once more in the great hall which Savonarola had built, and mass was said there, and laws for the morality of the city framed. We know nothing of Michael Angelo's part in this sudden movement. He filled no office—was consistent then as ever, to his refusal to take part in politics; and we only know that his sympathies were with the republic.

In August 1527, the new government made atonement to Michael Angelo for the insult he had suffered in the matter of the Hercules, by giving him the block, which Bandinelli had not yet begun. He never touched it, however; for the catastrophe came too soon, and Bandinelli's friends were in power again.

Clement, having leagued himself with the Emperor

as the only chance for his own safety, now proceeded to intrigue with Florence, which, however, true in this last hour to herself, refused to break faith with her allies, or to accept overtures of which the return of the Medici was the price ; and the defences were commenced. In April 1529, Michael Angelo was appointed commissary-general of the fortifications, and the work began in earnest. It was a mournful task with which they commenced, for the suburbs had to be destroyed, and all the beautiful churches and houses pulled down, so as to afford no assistance to the besiegers ; but a spirit of patriotism possessed the people, and there was not a dissentient voice. One of the ruined monasteries, San Sabri, still contains a fresco by Andrea del Sarto, of the Last Supper, said to have been saved by Michael Angelo when the building was demolished. Florence stood alone now, deserted by all, in the peace of Cambrai, unable to negotiate with Charles, because of the determination of Clement to gratify his revenge.

There is something very grand in this last gallant effort of a noble people to save their freedom ; and it is sad to know that but for treachery within the walls, their courage and patience would have sufficed to baffle the enemy. In September 1529, suspecting treachery, unable to obtain hearing and credit from

the government, and thinking with his usual morbid hopelessness that all was lost, Michael Angelo threw up his post, and fled secretly to Venice ; but he had over-rated the extent of the mischief, and was induced to return to his place in command of the works in November. The city was as one man in that flash of heroic courage, and they returned for answer to the Pope, who once more made overtures, that they would rather destroy the city and die, than give it over to him or his. In that last scene of Florentine history, Michael Angelo stands, a grand central figure, fit alike for a poem, a picture, or a hero's place in history ; ennobling the fruitless struggle with his high-strung patriotism, dignifying it with his uncalculating faith. The attack began on San Miniato, over the tower of which, Michael Angelo had, in his foresight, hung wool-sacks, and so saved the beautiful old campanile. There it still stands, a memorial of the last struggle for Florentine freedom ; and from it we may still gaze on that same sweet landscape which Michael Angelo watched day by day through the long summer days of 1529—the fertile valley, with the Arno winding along like a silver thread—the woods of Fiesole, and the blue distance of the Apennines. The end is well known. Malatesta Baglione, the commanding officer, whose

name has come down in history covered with disgrace, prevented the last sortie, and introduced the enemy within the gates ; and on August 12th, 1530, Clement the Medicean became master of the city, and Florentine liberty expired.

Michael Angelo retired into the campanile of San Niccolo, near San Miniato, and in silence and solitude nursed his bitter sorrow, disregarding the search of the Pope for him. At last he appeared again, and went on with the tombs of the Medici ; and in the course of the next year were finished the four great figures for the sarcophagi of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici,* which, solemn as they are in themselves, borrow a still greater solemnity from the history and period of their execution, in the direst hour of Florence and the despairing sorrow of the great master's soul. Too strangely awful, and dimly symbolic for description, are these four sculptures of Night and Morning, Twilight and Dawn, shadowing forth the Life and Death, the Passing and Awakening, of the soul of man. Life, in the fullest strength of manhood ; Death, in the uttermost weakness of sleeping womanhood ; Twilight, the awful passage of

* Lorenzo and Giuliano were brothers of Leo X., and grandsons of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

the passing soul, figured by the dying agony ; Dawn, the unimaginable awakening to immortality of the wondering soul, by the rousing out of sleep as of fitful and painful dream, or as of the chill light, when "the casement slowly grows a glimmering square," ere the first crimson hue dispels the shadows of night. To the statue of Night, which seems to have excited more admiration than the other figures, were found affixed, according to the fashion of that age, after the unveiling of a new piece of statuary, many anonymous verses. One was this—"Night which thou seest here sleeping, was carved by an Angel's hand in the stone ; but though sleeping, she yet lives. If thou doubttest, awake her." Michael Angelo's mournful reply was found affixed next day : "Sleep is dear to me as long as sorrow and shame last among us wake me not, I pray you ; speak gently." So ended the sacristy work, which was never finished, or the interior painted as had been intended.

Henceforth, Michael Angelo was a voluntary exile from Florence. The tyrant, Alessandro de' Medici, reigned there, and Bandinelli secured his place as court favourite, and went on with the Hercules. Florence was Florence no longer to the artist-patriot ; and no offers ever induced him to return.

In the winter of 1533, Clement proposed the paint-

ing of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel, from which Michael Angelo at first excused himself on the plea that he must now fulfil the long-standing contract for Julius II.'s monument. He was, however, compelled at last to prepare the designs; and with the help of Sebastian del Piombo, he scraped off Perugino's fresco and prepared the wall, and after thirty years took up his brush again, to paint the work more inseparably associated with his name than any other, and so mistakenly considered his greatest work. Clement VII. died in the autumn of 1534, before the work was begun; but the new Pope, Paul III., was even more anxious than his predecessor to monopolise Michael Angelo's services, and the painting was commenced. After seven years of solitary labour he completed the gigantic fresco; and on the Christmas festival of 1541, the chapel was opened. The Pope came to see the painting before it was finished, bringing the master of the ceremonies with him, a stiff, high-bred, old Italian gentleman. Paul asked him how he liked it; whereupon he answered gravely, that such a multitude of naked figures was more fit for the walls of a bath-house than a church. Michael Angelo, in grim satire, took up his brush and painted the old gentleman immediately under the figure of Minos. There was a

reaction against the muscular treatment of the figures some time afterwards, admired though they were at this time; and when Cardinal Caraffa was made Pope, he caused many of them to be draped. This work of Michael Angelo's, painted in failing power, and when hope and faith were dim within his soul, has been strangely exalted, as though the perfection of its muscularity must establish its claim to be the most sublime picture in the world. It is a strange problem how so great a man, his mind formed on and profoundly versed in the mystical teaching of Dante, could have so failed in the motive of this subject, of all possible subjects the most tremendous, as to have sacrificed noble teaching and Christian thought, to a mere display of anatomy. That Michael Angelo, deeply religious as was his mind, was not himself materialistic, we know; but it would seem as if his perceptions had been warped and darkened concerning the true relation of the human body to the soul. Such problems have perplexed all generations of the world's thinkers, and only find their solution—partial indeed, but enough for the days of our dimness—in the doctrine of the Incarnation. No marvel indeed that good men's faith should fail, in days when all sins of the flesh were abroad uncloaked throughout the court of the Vicar of

Christ ; and that a phase of Protestantism was developed, which left its mark in the art which it extinguished, in the giving to the body a fictitious honour which exalted it in reality above the soul. But to contend for the nobility of this picture, and to rank it above the sublime conceptions of Giotto and Orcagna, is to say that the aim of art is to exhibit contortions of limbs and agonies of emotion, instead of the majesty of man made in the image of God, and the illimitable beauty of the soul hereafter to awake up anew in His likeness, and be satisfied. Think of that consummation of all things, to which all ages of Christendom have looked in trembling joy ; in the expectation of which, that whole multitude which no man can number, of saints, and martyrs, and confessors, and doctors, have counted not their lives dear to themselves ; in the sure and certain hope of which the Church has committed her dead to rest for eighteen centuries ; the expression of faith in it passed on through all the ages, and sung as a note of triumph wherever the creed of Christendom is confessed. Think of the indescribable grandeur of that supreme moment, when He that sitteth on the throne shall proclaim, "It is done !" and then consider that wild passionate mass of human beings, seemingly half desperate in their self-absorbed,

agonised wonder if they are to be hurled down by the wrath of the repellent Figure above. Miserably inadequate conception of that glorious Day known to the Lord, when our redemption shall draw nigh ! It is the teaching of terror ; of faith without hope.* Michael Angelo had, it is well known, borrowed the idea of Orcagna's figure of our Lord ; yet, strangely enough, he missed the whole meaning of its gestures. The well-known figure of Christ in Michael Angelo's picture, disposed—one might say, distorted—so as to exhibit best the muscular action, has the left hand closed across the breast, the right hand raised in threatening gesture. But "the old painter theologian had," as Professor Ruskin said not long since, "another meaning in the action."† The left hand is closed indeed, but it is to draw back the drapery that men may look on Him whom they have pierced ; the right hand is raised indeed, but as in showing His glorified wounds, that they who gaze may be glad as were those few in the upper chamber long ago, when they saw the Lord. It is vain to pursue the comparison between the two pictures ; a century and a half of

* See Professor Ruskin's lecture on the ' Relations between Michael Angelo and Tintoret ' on this subject.

† Lecture x. of the ' Val d'Arno, series of Oxford Lectures, 1873. See also Didron's ' Christian Iconography ' on this subject.

gradually darkening faith in Christ lies between them.

It was while Michael Angelo was painting in the Sistine Chapel, that he passed under the great influence of his life, and made the friendship of Vittoria Colonna, Marchioness of Pescara. Fitted in every way, alike to enchant, to inspire, or to save a great man's soul; gifted with beauty and genius, trained in all lofty learning, disciplined by earnest devotion; she brought to Michael Angelo, in his old age, a message from God; and the clouds rolled off from his soul, as, holding by her hand, and seeing with her eyes, he cast aside the entanglements of philosophies, and bowed his head before the Cross of Christ. "As Beatrice called back Dante," it has been well said, "from the *selva oscura* in which he had wandered, into the *verace via* which led to Paradise, so Vittoria Colonna reclaimed Michael Angelo from the dreams and pursuits of Philosophy, Poetry, and Art, and showed him where to find a truer wisdom, a higher inspiration, a more ideal beauty."* She came, in 1536, to Rome, a widow, mourning with a lifelong sorrow the loss of an adored husband, and would have taken the veil but

* 'Edinburgh Review,' October 1857. Article on Michael Angelo.

for the interference of Clement VII., who valued her social and political importance too highly to allow her to take such a step. So she lived the life of a religious in her own palace, near the nunnery of San Silvestro on Monte Cavallo, and there gathered round her a small circle of valued friends, of whom Michael Angelo was among the dearest; and these years of her sojourn in Rome were the happiest and most peaceful of all the great artist's life. A description has been left us, by a Portuguese artist, of one or two of those Sunday meetings, to which he was admitted; and we can picture to ourselves, by the help of his vivid sketch, the little group which met and listened to the exposition of S. Paul's Epistles in the quiet convent church, and exchanged deep thoughts as they sat through the long summer Sundays under the laurel-trees in the Colonna gardens, with the city lying at their feet. During her absence from Rome in 1541, Michael Angelo executed a drawing of the Crucifixion* for her, intended, it is supposed, as a design of a carved crucifix for her approval; and her letter in acknowledgment of it, warmly appreciative, and saying that she likes it too well to return, it is

* No. 73 in the Oxford Collection is a copy of it, thought by Grimm (see 'Life of Michael Angelo') to be the original. See Robinson's 'Catalogue of the Oxford Collection.'

among the correspondence in the British Museum. She died in 1547, Michael Angelo visiting her to the last, mourning her loss through all his remaining life, and passionately regretting that in that last sorrowful hour, when he was called to her death-bed, he had only kissed her hand, and not her face also. So, with the only soul which ever spoke face to face with Michael Angelo's, passed away the one all-powerful influence of his life ; and the love which had been briefly given, its work completed was taken from him, that he might accept a more infinite Love, and be perfected for its eternal inheritance.

In the same year (1547), when he was close upon seventy years of age, he was appointed architect of S. Peter's, having outlived Bramante, Raffaelle, and San Gallo. The grand old Basilica had been ruthlessly demolished by Bramante, in his ambition to gratify the impatient desires of Julius II. regarding the new Cathedral ; the beautiful marbles, mosaics, and tombs, with which it was filled, had been, to Michael Angelo's great grief, extensively injured ; and it only remained to him now to make the best of the work as he found it, and carry on the new plans. He returned to Bramante's design—the four great pillars on which the dome was to rest, being the only part which Bramante had lived to complete—reject-

ing Raffaele's alteration of the nave which formed a Latin cross, and constructing the dome after the great invention of Brunelleschi at Florence. He would have an opportunity now, said his friends to him, of building a cathedral which should surpass S. Maria del Fiore. "I will make it her sister," he said; "greater, perhaps, not more beautiful." The 'tragedy of the monument' came at last to an end, between 1545 and 1550. A letter of Michael Angelo's remains, in which his sorrow bursts forth passionately at the time, and fortune, and reputation he has wasted, only to be called an extortioner and a robber, "by ignorant men who were not born when he began the work." The Duke of Urbino sent him an insulting message, accusing him of falsehood and dishonesty. "Tell him," said the old artist-aristocrat, "that he has fashioned a Michael Angelo out of the materials he found in his own heart." So the three figures which are all that remain of that vast design were completed according to the new contract: Leah and Rachel—the Active and the Contemplative Life; and the mighty figure of Moses, which had been Michael Angelo's companion through forty years of his earthly wanderings; which seems to recall to us the form and features of the "thunderer of the Vatican," and which Paul III. had declared to be

alone a worthy monument of his predecessor. The proud and ambitious Julius II., who had desired to lie in the most conspicuous and honourable place in the great Cathedral of Western Christendom, has no monument there at all, but lies, well-nigh unremembered, in the splendid tomb of his uncle, Sixtus IV.; his own monument banished to an ancient suburban basilica,* where, nevertheless, the solemn quiet, and dim light, suit well the majestic form on which the spirit of Michael Angelo seems to rest.

The last ten years of the great master's life were clouded with trouble and disappointment. There were plots against him among the artists, who, he must have felt bitterly, were anxiously looking for the old man's death, that they might step into his place; there were factions, too, among the Cardinals, and attempts to turn him out of his place as architect of S. Peter's, although he had refused to take any payment for this, his last work for the Church.

Caraffa (Paul IV.) was even brutal enough to deprive him of his pension, the moment he was elected Pope. His old servant, the companion of

* S. Peter in Vincoli, where Michael Angelo temporarily erected the figures while working at them.

half a life-time—less a servant, indeed, than a “brother beloved,”—died too, mourning only in his death that he was leaving his master alone in his extreme old age.

The Spanish campaign drove him out of Rome in 1556; and he was fain to go into the wilds of Carrara, where, as he wrote to Vasari on his return, he “left more than half his soul, since there was no peace but in the woods.” Vasari came to see him late one night, bringing a message from the Pope, and found him working by the light of a lantern. Seeing that Vasari was trying to catch a glimpse of his work, Michael Angelo dropped the lantern, and left them in darkness. “I am so old,” he said, “that Death often pulls me by the garment to come with him; and some day I shall fall down like this lantern, and my last spark of life will be extinguished.” Behind the high altar of S. Maria del Fiore lies this sculpture—a dead Christ; his last work, left unfinished, and which, Vasari says, he intended to stand, as a monument to himself, near the altar where he hoped to rest.

His poetry tells us much of the last thoughts of the old patriarch, as he came face to face with death. How deep was his repentance for his life's failures, how earnest his wish to free himself from the clinging to earthly things which he thought he detected in

himself still ; how humbly he looked back on his work, how calmly prepared he was for that vast unknown Future, to which he had now learned to look in hope. He had seen many changes, political and religious ; he had outlived the extinction of that dream of his life, the freedom of Florence ; had seen the wild fanaticism of German Protestantism on the one side, and the quenching of the last sparks of religion and morality, by the hopeless depravity of the Roman court, on the other ; and had beheld the sudden gleam of light which Savonarola had shed over Italy, set in more utter darkness. But he had kept, through the breaking up around him of political and religious systems, the Divine Ideal which he had set before him in early life ; and the great problems of life unrolled themselves to his soul, as he stood, so long beyond the threescore years and ten of the days of our age, on the confines of eternity.

In the winter of 1564 his strength visibly failed, and the end came so swiftly and quietly at last, that his nephew was too late to see him alive. His last words were few, and as of one who had long since done with earth. His "soul he resigned to God, his body to the earth, his worldly possessions to his relations ;" and with the one last wish that he should rest in Florence, beloved to the end, and the request to those

around him that they would read to him of the Passion of Christ, he passed away. "All things find rest upon their journey's end," he had said ; * and rest had come at last to him too—the Rest that remaineth for the people of God.

The artists met at the gates of Florence, the evening that Michael Angelo came home to his native city, after thirty years' exile, and the body was carried as quietly as possible to S. Piero Maggiore. But the news spread quickly through the city, and next evening at nightfall, a dense multitude gathered in profound silence, and formed a long procession to S. Croce, the younger artists carrying the bier, and the older ones surrounding it with torches. They laid him before the altar, and then the bearers uncovered the coffin, and the people streamed in, each one imploring to look on his face once more. Well might they gaze with tear-dimmed eyes, and hearts too full for words ; for there lay the last of the patriots of Florence—the last of her mighty men !

* In his sonnet to Night, the Shadow of Death.

WORKS BY MICHAEL ANGELO IN BRITISH GALLERIES.

- National Gallery* 1. Dream of Life. *Painted from his design.* 2. Entombment of Christ. 3. Virgin, Child, and angels.
- Windsor* Three volumes of drawings.
- Christ Church, Oxford* Sketches for the Judgment of Minos.
- Chatsworth* Several drawings.
- Oxford Gallery* Collection of framed drawings.
- Holkham* Group of figures for the 'Cartoon of the Bathers.'

had been built on the desolate spot, and a little population gathered around it. Here the fugitives came, and spread themselves over it and the surrounding islands,—divided from each other by those narrow channels of shallow water unmoved by the ebb and flow of the Adriatic,—which were their bulwarks against invasion then, and became, in after-times, the sea-streets of the island city.

It was not, however, until the Lombard invasion, in the seventh century, that Altinum was finally destroyed, and the whole population forced to flee from the coast of Venetia to the Lagunes, for shelter. In distress and failing of heart, while still homeless on these barren sand-shores, the first cathedral of the colony was built, the fine old Basilica of Torcello. It was founded about 641, but fell into ruin in the ninth century; and the chief interest of the eleventh-century building, now standing, lies in the fact that the plan of the ancient basilica was retained, together with parts of the earlier building. It is unlike any other Venetian church, and the internal arrangements of apse and chancel are entirely Roman. The *synthronus* around the apse—six tiers of seats, once white marble, now mostly brickwork—is the most remarkable example remaining of this part of an ancient Basilica; and here, depicted on the wall,

for the first time, we see, sternly and morbidly conceived, the dread scene of the Last Judgment, together with Hell and Paradise.

That connection with the Eastern Empire, which exercised so powerful an influence on their art, must have begun early; for in 827 the body of S. Mark was brought from Alexandria by Venetian traders, who had induced the priests of S. Mark's Church to entrust the precious relic to them, and thus save it from the dreaded desecration of the Saracens. So, to the distant shore where, as Venetian tradition tells, an angel appeared to S. Mark as he landed on his mission, telling him that his bones should rest there, they bore him in triumph; and the '*Pax tibi Marci, Evangelista meus*' of the angelic message, was inscribed on the book which the Venetian lion, thenceforth their symbol, carried; the watchword of the city ever after, '*Viva S. Marco!*' and the remembrance of the precious treasure they guarded, an incentive to national heroism.*

* The exact spot where the sacred relic lay was transmitted as a profound secret from Doge to Doge. In the middle of the fourteenth century the secret appears to have been lost, and it has always been supposed in modern times, that S. Mark's body perished in the fire of 976. In 1811, however, the sacred remains were found wrapped in silk, in a coffin of the eleventh century, in which were enclosed coins, relics, and incense, under the high altar. See Hemans' '*Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art*,' vol. i. ch. iv. p. 168.

In 697, the first Doge was chosen ; in 809 the sixty little islets round Rialto were connected by bridges, and the united colony received the name, and became the city, of Venice.

In 976,* the first Church of S. Mark was destroyed by fire ; and from its ruins arose that glorious church, the building of which, carried on for a century, enriched by the gifts of successive Doges, enhanced by Eastern treasures, and completed by Eastern workmen, was the crown of Byzantine art, the most perfect piece of colour harmony in the world. It was at Venice, and there only, that the worn-out Byzantine school, freed from the trammels of Eastern tradition, flashed into brief life ; and the faultless harmony of that chord of colour which it struck in S. Mark's, was prolonged like a sweet echo through centuries to come, and Titian, Tintoret, and Giorgione caught the light of it, and arrested it for ever.

The plan is a Greek cross, crowned with five domes ; and a Gothic façade, brilliant with mosaic and gold, and exquisite with sculpture, forms the front. The precious marbles with which S. Mark's is so rich, are supposed to have come from one or other of the

* In 813 the first Ducal Palace and Chapel had been built. The latter was dedicated to S. Theodore, the patron of the city ; but on the placing of S. Mark's body within it, it was re-dedicated under his name.

ancient cities of Venetia abandoned by the emigrants. The curious bronze portals are of most ancient Byzantine workmanship ; one of them having been taken from S. Sophia at the sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders. Of equal antiquity are the baldacchino, carved with sculptures, also Byzantine ; and the splendid altar of gold, enamel, and gems, begun in the tenth century at Constantinople, and gradually enriched throughout succeeding centuries. Our Lord enthroned occupies the front, and around and beneath Him are Apostles, Evangelists, and Saints, together with scenes from the life of S. Mark. Of the tenth or eleventh century is the marble chair called S. Mark's throne, carved with emblems.

We will pause for a short space before this great monument of Christian art ; for if it be the foundation of the great colour-school of the world, and also, as the writer believes, the model and pattern of a Christian church, it may be worth while for us to consider the secret of its power and beauty. The baptistery is a vaulted room,* dimly lighted, its roof powdered with gold stars, its walls of alabaster, and floor of glowing mosaic ; a red marble seat skirting

* The atrium and baptistery are one, extending along the width of the building.

the wall. A bas-relief of the Baptism of Christ stands over the altar. On the vault are two circles of mosaic figures ;* one representing the Apostles, the other the nine orders of the heavenly hierarchy—Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, Angels. On the walls, the history of S. John Baptist mingles the hope and joy of the first entrance into the Church of Christ, with thoughts of solemn warning. An open worked bronze door leads into the church—and here, if any doubt the solemnity of perfect colour, let them pause for a space, and gaze from golden dome to waved rainbow pavement in that dim twilight of subdued loveliness. In the large porticoes attached to each side of the church, are placed, as representing the first covenant of man with God, the history of Genesis, from the Fall to the deliverance from Egypt. Over the west entrance is the Lord enthroned, the Blessed Virgin and S. Mark adoring, one on each side ; on the open Gospel held by Christ, the words written, “ I am the Door ; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved ;” round the mosaic, “ I am the Gate of Life ; let those who are Mine enter by Me ;” and above all, the solemn reminder, “ Who He was,

* Probably of the eleventh century.

and from Whom He came, and at what price He redeemed thee, and why He made thee, and gave thee all things, do thou consider." * In the centre of the western cupola, typical of that first and greatest gift to those dedicated to God in Baptism, is the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, twelve streams of fire issuing from Him on the heads of the Twelve Apostles, who stand around ; lower down, under the windows, the nations of those who witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the new-born Church, that first Pentecostal morning ; the picture completed by the four Angels, at the extremities of the cupola, bearing the hymn of the Church triumphant, when the Spirit's perfected work shall have been sealed unto the day of redemption ; the 'Sanctus' of the heavenly choir bearing its reference also, to the sanctification of the Spirit's earthly mission. On the second cupola is represented the work of Redemption, from the Betrayal to the Resurrection of Christ, as the next object on which the Christian soul should fix itself, in its passage from the new birth of Baptism. Passing to the centre of the church, we find the great dome filled with a

* These and the next series are probably the most ancient of the mosaics.

picture of the Ascension amidst the group on Mount Olivet, the two white-robed messengers saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Below are the Christian virtues, the "gifts unto men" of our ascended Lord; and lower yet, at the corners of the cupola, the four Evangelists, on whose record we receive the now completed Gospel of Christ; beneath their feet flowing the four rivers of the Paradise won for evermore by Him who has gone to prepare a place there for us. It was a grand thought which made the old mosaicists fix their central picture in the story of the Ascension; uniting in one the teaching of the Sacrifice of the Cross now perfected in the eternal Priesthood, without its contemplation of pain, and the reminder of the sure return of Christ, without the terrors of the Judgment Day. The cupola over the altar has the Patriarchs and Prophets, ranged in order around the great figure of Christ enthroned. The side-chapels contain mosaics of the Life of our Lord and His Apostles; and there were also once illustrations of the Revelation, now superseded by Renaissance work. Such was the Church of S. Mark; a pictured Bible, which they who ran might read; a Missal emblazoned for all

ranks and generations, precious within and without ; set in priceless binding, and with jewelled clasps, but more precious in the spiritual teaching written in its golden letters from altar to vestibule.

No words but Mr. Ruskin's will do to describe the exterior. "A multitude of pillars and white domes clustered into a long low pyramid of coloured light ; a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal and mother-of-pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber, and delicate as ivory—sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes ; and in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptred, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago. And round the walls of the porches there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield

to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, 'their bluest veins to kiss'—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as a receding tide leaves the waved sand; their capitals rich with interwoven tracery, rooted knots of herbage, and drifting leaves of acanthus and vine, and mystical signs, all beginning and ending in the Cross; and above them, in the broad archivolts, a continuous chain of language and of life—angels, and the signs of heaven, and the labours of men, each in its appointed season upon the earth; and above these, another range of glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers,—a confusion of delight, amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses * are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the S. Mark's lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars, until at last, as if in ecstasy, the crests of the arches break into a marble foam, and toss themselves far into the blue sky in flashes and wreaths of sculptured spray, as if the breakers on the Lido shore had been frost-bound before they fell, and the sea-nymphs had inlaid them with coral and amethyst." †

* The bronze horses were among the spoils taken from Constantinople by the Venetians at the conquest of the Crusaders. They are supposed to have been brought from Alexandria by Augustus.

† 'Stones of Venice,' vol. ii. chap. iv. p. 67.

The Ducal Palace has been called by Professor Ruskin the "central building of the world," containing as it does, in nearly equal proportions, the three great germs of mediæval art—the Roman, the Arab, and the Lombard. The genius of the one forgotten man who designed that magnificent building, discovered the most perfect adaptation of the Gothic style to domestic purposes the world has seen; and all the subsequent palaces of Venice were but adaptations and imitations on its model.

The first building of the Ducal Palace—the council-chamber, which superseded the old Byzantine building—was begun in 1301. In 1340, the present council-chamber was commenced, with all the finest part of the palace, and the sea-front; and throughout the century the work went gradually on, being completed in 1423. Curiously enough, having attained that perfection in Gothic architecture, the Venetians never seem to have extended their power to designing Gothic churches. The Franciscans and Dominicans, those indefatigable patrons of mediæval art, introduced ecclesiastical Gothic from the mainland in their two magnificent churches of the Frari and SS. Giovanni e Paolo, the latter of which has been called the Westminster Abbey of Venice, from the illustrious dead who rest

there; but the style never took root,* and the Venetians continued to cling, to the last, to their own peculiar type of church-building.

The same phenomenon meets us in Venetian painting as we have seen in its architecture, which thus flashed into vitality and beauty in the Ducal Palace, as the production, not of slow and gradual development, but of the genius of a single man. Perhaps the insular situation of Venice, which cut her off in degree from the free intercourse held amongst other Italian cities, engendered an exclusiveness which hindered her from adopting the discoveries and improvements by which the other schools of Italy were perfected, and so prevented the development of her art. However this may be, it is certain that Giotto painted his lovely chapel in Padua, and other Florentines worked, both there and in Venice, without kindling any spark of life; and that the

* Not quite correct. The Ducal Palace traceries are shown, in the 'Stones of Venice,' to have been founded on those of the Frari. (ED.)

The reference is vol. ii. ch. vii. p. 234. "The real root of the Ducal Palace is the apse of the Church of the Frari. The traceries of that apse, though earlier and ruder in workmanship, are nearly the same in mouldings, and precisely the same in treatment (especially in the placing of the lions' heads), as those of the great Ducal Arcade; and the originality of thought in the architect of the Ducal Palace consists in his having adopted those traceries, in a more highly developed and finished form, to civil uses."

painters clung more or less to the old Byzantine types, until the great master, John Bellini, educated beyond Venetian influence, arose among them. It is curious, too, as showing the lack of sympathy between Venice and the rest of Italy, that the mighty poem of Dante, which was the inspiration of Italian art, from Giotto to Botticelli and Michael Angelo, was actually translated by the Venetians into Latin! The real reason of this was probably the inadequacy of the Venetian dialect, which also hindered the growth of a national poetry; but the translation of the great poem of Italy into another language, is none the less significant, as showing the lack of sympathy which Venice had with the sources of the inspiration of Italian art.

The art of Padua was somewhat in advance of that of Venice in the fourteenth century—in consequence, perhaps, of their nearer connection with Florence; though, like Venice, her artists seem to have been strangely insensible to the inspirations of Giotto. The Paduan artists, however, exercised a strong influence over those of Venice, and we must glance over a few of their names. The first atelier of Padua was opened by Francesco Squarcione, who owes his reputation chiefly to this fact, and to the influence which his collection of antiques exercised over

Paduan art, rather than to any special genius of his own. He was the son of a Paduan embroiderer, and educated in this artistic trade, but determined after a time to leave his father's business, and open an atelier. He first travelled, however, in Greece and Italy, where he invested in a choice collection of classical models, which are said to have been much admired by Lorenzo the Magnificent, on his visit to Padua. These fine models, together with his own indefatigable industry, procured him a large school of young artists, and his name became famous as the founder of a school.*

The classical turn which Squarcione thus gave to Paduan art was developed by his pupil, Andrea Mantegna, who devoted himself so exclusively to the study of the ancient models, that he entirely neglected the far more necessary study of real life, which had made Florentine art so great. Mantegna's figures look as if they might have been copied from bas-reliefs, so frigid, lifeless, and soulless, are they. The knowledge of perspective, foreshortening, and *chiaroscuro*, which he acquired, was wonderful; and it was probably for this reason that his influence was so

* Very few of his paintings remain, and those are scarcely worthy of note.

strong over the Italian schools, the decline of which was perhaps hastened by his heartless realism. His paintings seem to be more devoid of spiritual perception, or of tenderness of thought, than those of any other great artist. No feeling had he for vital beauty of human face, or the lower creatures of the earth;* and the chief remains of his works represent the dull stupid faces of Mantuan dukes† unredeemed by a spark of soul; and classical pieces, chiefly remarkable for the wonderful knowledge displayed in them of ancient manners and costumes. His 'Dead Christ,' in the Brera Gallery at Milan, a mere study of foreshortening, and in which the faces are almost repulsive, is a painful instance of the heartlessness of his painting. In the Louvre are portraits by him, of Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, and his

* Professor Ruskin reminds me to notice here, in qualification, Mantegna's power of painting inanimate forms, as *e.g.* in the trees and leaves of his Madonna of the National Gallery. "He is," says Professor Ruskin, "the most wonderful leaf-painter of Lombardy." His garlands of fruit and flowers are also wonderfully painted—a Madonna of his in S. Zenone, Verona, is specially rich in them. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle notice the strong contrast between the spirited painting of the garlanded cornices and ceilings of Mantua Castle, and the starched figures of the Gonzagas on the walls.

† In Mantua Castle, whither Mantegna was invited by the Marquis in 1456, with the offer of a liberal salary, are remains of his frescoes of the Gonzaga family, and one saloon is still called by his name. The chief part of the numerous frescoes in this castle were, most disgracefully, destroyed by the French in 1796.

wife, kneeling before the Madonna, in gratitude for their deliverance from Charles VIII. of France, in 1495. Hampton Court has the series of water-colour cartoons, called the Triumphs of Cæsar, originally painted for a palace at Mantua.

This classical school of Mantegna's, however, never took root in Venice. One of the most noticeable features of Venetian art is its profound religion, the cause of which may perhaps be found in the serious character of the race, showing itself most strongly in all things connected with their government and public actions. In no other national hall has been represented—central amidst all other decoration—not scenes of national history, or heroic legend, but the Paradise of the life to come.* The unerring colour-instinct of the race also long preserved the Venetians from the fatal fascinations of *chiaro-scuro*; and the pure colour, and shining gold of early Italian art, were more precious to them than all the discoveries of Mantegna. Thus it was that the two schools, on which the religious art of Venice was founded, were the Umbrian, the type of perfect spiritual peace; and the Flemish, with its mosaic-like combinations of exquisite colour. It was perhaps

* The first Paradise was painted by Guariento, a Paduan pupil of Giotto's, on the completion of the building, in 1365; and it was replaced by Tintoret's picture of the same subject.

their traffic which first brought the Venetians into contact with Flanders; but it is evident that there was close sympathy between the two schools, since Venetian artists often studied in Germany, and Flemish artists were warmly received in Venice. Memling, it is said, resided some time in Venice, and painted in the famous Breviary of Cardinal Grimani, which was considered as a marvel of art, and is still treasured in Venice as one of her choicest possessions.

It was from Gentile da Fabriano, the Umbrian painter, that Jacopo Bellini learned the art which he transmitted to his two more famous sons. He followed his master to Florence, in early life, and thus acquired knowledge and sympathies beyond the narrow range of Venetian art, though always remaining strongly imbued with its mannerisms. Some frescoes of his still remain at Verona; and we are fortunate enough to possess, in the British Museum, a sketch-book of his, containing ninety-nine studies of great interest, dated by him 1430. It became the property of the eldest son, Gentile, who bequeathed it to his brother as a precious heirloom.*

* A picture in the University Galleries at Oxford, the artist of which is said in the catalogue to be unknown, was probably done either by him or in his atelier. It represents a Dominican preaching to a Venetian congregation.

The two brothers, Gentile, and Zuan or Giovanni Bellini, took up their residence in Venice, after their father's death, having lived and worked much in Padua previously, where their sister had, it is said, been married to Andrea Mantegna. In the Ducal Palace is still to be seen Gentile's first commission for the republic—the great organ-doors of S. Mark's, painted on both sides, representing S. Mark and S. Theodore (the first patron of Venice), S. Jerome, and S. Francis. In 1474 he was commissioned to paint a series of pictures in the great council-hall, the destruction of which by fire in 1577 was an irreparable loss. There were fourteen compartments, representing the whole story of the quarrel between Barbarossa and Alexander III., in which the Venetians took so prominent a part, and which so redounded to their honour, that the story was to them as a national legend, as popular a theme for art or poetry as our own King Arthur. These pictures were his greatest work; but there remain, in the Academy of Venice, three large paintings of his of the Legend of the Cross, painted for the Brotherhood of S. John, and for which he refused all payment. The inscription of one of them is, '*Gentilis Bellinus amore incensus Crucis, 1496.*' Gentile was sent by the Republic in 1479 to the Sultan, who had requested

the Venetians to send him a painter. Here he took many portraits, among which two small pen-and-ink sketches of a chief and his lady are in the British Museum, and a much damaged portrait of the Sultan is in the possession of Mr. Layard—interesting as representing the shrewd, wily, yet not altogether unpleasant face of the conqueror of Constantinople. A still more curious memorial of Gentile's Eastern life is a picture in the Louvre, representing the reception of a Venetian embassy by the Grand Vizier. He died at eighty years of age, leaving his last painting—the Sermon of S. Mark at Venice*—to his brother to finish, on which condition only he bequeathed to him their father's sketch-book. His pictures have left to us almost the only memorial we have of the glowing colour of the Venetian palaces, the glory of which in their sculptured lines of white and gold, and blazonry of heraldic devices on the soft rich red of the frescoed walls, it is difficult even to imagine.

The two brothers seem to have agreed to work independently of each other, from the time of their father's death; and the only work in which we know

* This picture, together with the 'Miracle of the Cross,' represents Gentile's best work. It is in the Brera Gallery, Milan.

them to have been associated, was the commission for the painting of the council-hall. When Gentile was sent by the government to Constantinople, his brother was appointed to carry on the works ; and after Gentile's return, the two completed the painting together. John Bellini stands out in art history as the only man who was at once the greatest master, the culminating genius, and the last representative, of the school to which he belonged. He assimilated to himself the qualities of the various schools which had met in Padua, learning something from all, influenced slightly by all, combining with the exquisite skill he acquired, that magnificent power of colour which made him the founder of the Venetian school. The last of the religious painters of Italy, we linger around his lovely works most tenderly, perhaps ; for with their perfect harmony of colour and form, which jars not on the finest sense of beauty, is mingled an intense spirituality, unsurpassed among the painters of mediæval Christendom. On his painting rests the crown which might have awaited the arts of Italy, had she been true, in the height of her knowledge and power, to the faith of Christ. It was John Bellini who brought the art of oil-painting to its utmost perfection. From the time that Antonello da Messina settled in Venice (about 1470), bringing with

him the German method of oil-painting, Bellini devoted himself to working out its perfection, sparing no time or labour, and patiently spending ten years, it is said, in the effort. Four hundred years have passed since the central period of John Bellini's painting, and Professor Ruskin's testimony* is that "no harmful change whatsoever" has passed upon that perfect workmanship. Faultless in finish, lustrous in colour, holy in thought, his works shine out in their sunny peace, amidst the passion and the unrest of the arts of Italy in their fall. Little recked the old Christian artist of the contempt of the Renaissance painters for the long-discarded golden backgrounds, which left them no room for their display of *chiaroscuro* and perspective; he would paint on them if he chose, though he could rival Titian and Tintoret in lovely landscape—even surpass them in its lustrous colouring. One more thing is to be noted of him, not altogether insignificant. He lived to be ninety years of age, and there is not discernible in all that long life, reaching far into the Renaissance age, one token of his tampering with his own convictions, or one evidence of failing spiritual power. Going on from strength to strength in undisturbed serenity, the

* 'Relations between Tintoret and Michael Angelo.' Lecture delivered at Oxford, 1872.

works of his old age were among his most perfect ; and the Madonna of S. Zaccaria, which he painted when nearly eighty, is perhaps the loveliest of all the treasures which he bequeathed to Venice.

It was about the time that this picture was painted that Albert Dürer came to Venice. John Bellini, alone of the Venetian painters, held out the hand of fellowship to the young German artist, and was able, by the high position he held in Venice, to set Dürer above the intrigues by which the other painters sought to rid themselves of the foreigner, of whose skill they were so jealous. Perhaps it was in consequence of the respect in which Bellini was held by the government, that Dürer received such tempting offers to induce him to remain in Venice. "Giovanni Bellini," wrote Dürer, "has praised me highly to several gentlemen, and wishes to have something of my doing ; he called on me himself, and requested that I would paint a picture for him, for which, he said, he would pay me well. People are all surprised that I should be so much thought of by a person of his reputation. He is very old, but is still the best painter of them all." Such was Dürer's testimony to the life and work of John Bellini, standing alone in noble old age, whilst the artists of Renaissance Venice swept by him in their pride

and sensuality, half jealous, half scornful of him and of the young painter, in whom he had recognised the flash of inspiration.

In his last days John Bellini made the friendship of Ariosto at the court of Ferrara, where he went to paint in the palace, and he was afterwards introduced by Ariosto in 'Orlando Furioso.' His last work, painted when nearly ninety, was a picture of S. Jerome in the desert—a subject which had perhaps a peculiar interest for him, now on the verge of the grave, and on which is stamped the peace of the old man's soul. He died in that year, 1516.

With John Bellini closes the history of Christian art in Venice and in Europe. The great trio, whose names are familiar to us as the colourists of the world, and are so inseparably connected in our minds with the name of Venice, scarcely come within the scope of this chapter.

Giorgione and Titian were both pupils of John Bellini, but the latter left his studio early to follow the brilliant innovator, who first, of Venetian artists, cast aside the traditions of religious art. Giorgione was born and bred on one of the loveliest spots in the world—Castelfranco—and in his landscape we may see the spell which the magnificent scenery of his early home laid upon his spirit for ever. He was the great

landscape-painter of Italy—unapproached in his power of painting that lovely wooded scenery of vines and cypresses, and undulating hill and vale, which characterises Castelfranco. Giorgione was employed chiefly in painting the external walls of the Venetian palaces—a fashion which began two centuries previous to his time, but had now reached its height. It is to this cause, as well as to his early death, that the extreme rarity of his pictures is owing. The Gothic palaces of Venice were built of brick, covered with plaster, and then frescoed in diaper-patterns, of which the prevailing tone was a rich subdued red, interspersed with white, black, and grey.* The Ducal Palace, having been faced with marble instead of fresco, has preserved to us a perfect specimen of the decoration which covered, throughout the Gothic period, every palace in Venice. In the fourteenth century a change passed over the style of this mural painting. The diaper-work gradually gave way to figure and subject representations; until by the time Giorgione and Titian had won their reputation, the palace fronts were devoted to fresco

* Of the palaces now remaining in Venice, five only are of the twelfth, three of the fourteenth, and thirteen of the fifteenth century. See Hemans' '*History of Mediæval Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy*,' vol. ii. chap. vi. p. 329.

paintings, in which the greatest masters were employed. These precious works scarcely lasted the lifetime of the artists—so fatal was the exposed situation of Venice to them ; and thus, of the priceless work of one of the greatest of the Renaissance artists, nothing remains save an indistinguishable vestige on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi ; and those magnificent pictures, which made the walls of Venice burn in crimson and gold, as day by day they caught the rays of the setting sun, have vanished like a passing dream. With a rare combination of powers, Giorgione's playing and singing were so exquisite, that he was sought for by the nobles, to preside at their concerts. In some sense he may be called the greatest of Renaissance painters. For though in the gladness of his heart he painted and rejoiced in painting noble physical beauty, filling it with the unapproachable glory of his colour, he neither frittered his noble powers in obedience to despots like Raffaele, nor lowered them to work out sensual imaginations like Titian, nor crushed his spiritual senses like Michael Angelo. Giorgione died in 1511, when little more than thirty, of the plague—caught, it is said, from the lady to whom he was betrothed.*

* Such is Vasari's account ; but it seems doubtful.

Tintoret, the last of the great painters of Venice, reflected in faint and dying light that spirituality which had ever been the characteristic of Venetian art, and which lingered around it to the end. Passionately admiring Michael Angelo, Tintoret made it his chief aim to rival him in technical skill, writing on the wall of his studio, "The colouring of Titian and the design of Michael Angelo;" and that rivalry of the mighty Florentine was fatal to the true greatness of his work.

For all that can be said in honour of Tintoret, and of the noble qualities of his painting, we must refer our readers to Professor Ruskin's lecture on the subject, before mentioned, where he has given one of his unapproachable descriptions, of that last production of Christian art, the Paradise of the Ducal Palace, which he has characterised as the "thoughtfulest as well as the mightiest picture in the world"; and with which it seems to us that we cannot do better than close these chapters.

"In the highest centre is Christ, leaning on the globe of the earth, which is of dark crystal. Christ is crowned with a glory as of the sun, and all the picture is lighted by that glory, descending through circle beneath circle of cloud, and of flying or throned spirits.

“The Madonna, beneath Christ, and at some interval from Him, kneels to Him. She is crowned with the Seven Stars, and kneels on a cloud of angels, whose wings change into ruby fire where they are near her.

“The three great Archangels meeting from three sides, fly towards Christ. Michael delivers up his scales and sword. He is followed by the Thrones and Principalities of the earth; so inscribed—Throni—Principatus. The Spirits of the Thrones bear scales in their hands; and of the Princedoms, shining globes: beneath the wings of the last of these, are the four great teachers and lawgivers, S. Ambrose, S. Jerome, S. Gregory, S. Augustine, and behind S. Augustine stands his mother, watching him, her chief joy in Paradise.

“Under the Thrones, are set the Apostles, S. Paul separated a little from the rest, and put lowest, yet principal; under S. Paul is S. Christopher, bearing a massive globe, with a cross upon it: but to mark him as the Christ-bearer, since here in Paradise he cannot have the Child on his shoulders, Tintoret has thrown on the globe a flashing stellar reflection of the sun round the head of Christ.

“All this side of the picture is kept in glowing colour,—the four Doctors of the Church have golden mitres and mantles; except the Cardinal, S. Jerome,

who is in burning scarlet, his naked breast glowing, warm with noble life—the darker red of his robe relieved against a white glory.

“Opposite to Michael, Gabriel flies towards the Madonna, having in his hand the Annunciation lily, large, and triple-blossomed. Above him, and above Michael, equally, extends a cloud of white angels, inscribed ‘Serafini;’ but the group following Gabriel, and corresponding to the Throni following Michael, is inscribed ‘Cherubini.’ Under these are the great prophets, and singers and foretellers of the happiness or of the sorrow of time. David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and Amos of the herdsmen. David has a colossal golden psaltery laid horizontally across his knees;—two angels behind him dictate to him as he sings, looking up towards Christ; but one strong angel sweeps down to Solomon from among the Cherubs, and opens a book, resting it on the head of Solomon, who looks down earnestly, unconscious of it;—to the left of David, separate from the group of prophets, as Paul from the Apostles, is Moses, dark-robed;—in the full light, withdrawn far behind him, Abraham, embracing Isaac with his left arm, and near him, pale S. Agnes. In front, nearer, dark and colossal, stands the glorious figure of Santa Giustina of Padua; then a little subordinate to her, S. Catherine,

and, far on the left, and high, S. Barbara leaning on her tower. In front, nearer, flies Raphael ; and under him is the four-square group of the Evangelists. Beneath them, on the left Noah ; on the right, Adam and Eve, both floating unsupported by cloud or angel ; Noah buoyed by the Ark, which he holds above him, and it is *this* into which Solomon gazes down, so earnestly. Eve's face is, perhaps, the most beautiful ever painted by Tintoret—full in light, but dark-eyed. Adam floats beside her, his figure fading into a winged gloom, edged in the outline of fig-leaves. Far down, under these, central in the lowest part of the picture, rises the Angel of the Sea, praying for Venice ; for Tintoret conceives his Paradise as existing now, not as in the future. I at first mistook this soft Angel of the Sea for the Magdalen, for he is sustained by other three angels on either side, as the Magdalen is, in designs of earlier time, because of the verse, ' There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth.' But the Magdalen is on the right, behind S. Monica ; and on the same side, but lowest of all, Rachel, among the angels of her children, gathered now again to her for ever."

If these brief sketches have induced any of our readers to study with a greater interest and a more

definite aim, the productions of any of the great schools of Christian art, they will have fulfilled the best wishes of the writer. Some knowledge of art in its relations to history, is absolutely necessary to the appreciation of the works of any age or representative man of an age; and it is only in cultivating the faculty of observation by the help of such knowledge, that we become capable of intelligent criticisms. Such study is perhaps more than ordinarily essential to the comprehension of any of the schools of mediæval art. Three centuries of Protestant prejudice have dulled our eyes and our hearts to perception of the fact that there once existed in Europe a Religion which produced the most magnificent art, appealing fearlessly by its means to the senses as well as the intellects, the human sympathies as well as the spiritual instincts, of mankind. This art was a sealed book to the majority of educated people, until such writers as Lord Lindsay and M. Rio threw upon it the light of their knowledge and the glow of their enthusiasm. Since then, we have been slowly and gradually learning, that the periods of the most vital and perfect art, were also the periods of the most vital and perfect national religion. It has been the object of these pages to show that this art was produced, and could only have been produced,

by Christian men, possessed by a profound sense of the sacredness and responsibility of their mission as teachers of the Faith of Christ.

The one great aim of mediæval art was the teaching of spiritual truth; and unless we approach it with the perception of this fact, it will be to us but a passing dream of beauty. All art, Professor Ruskin has well and beautifully said—from the time when Christianity first settled over the conquerors of Italy—"all art thenceforward is but the expression of their joy when they had found the young Child with Mary His mother."*

To ordinary persons, uneducated to perceive the true end of art, it is the graphic delineation of incident which attracts; the more uneducated they are, the more commonplace of course the incident which attracts them. So that the Dutch pictures of the last century, being attuned to the level of the most vulgar minds, have been for many years the most popular; and our own exhibition walls have been covered with genre-subjects, such as the artists found that the public taste could alone appreciate. The cause, too, of Raffaele's popularity beyond

* The writer is quoting from memory, the lecture in which this was said being as yet unpublished.

all other great painters, has been that predominance of exaggerated dramatic representation, which, in his pictures, is visible above all moral and spiritual qualities.* His errors have been accepted and extended ever since, by the ignorant, the thoughtless, and the heartless, so that for long no one dared to question the standard of criticism which his pictures had set up; and even those to whom his graceful unrealities gave no pleasure, were compelled to suppress their convictions.

Of the schools of mediæval art, at which we have glanced, the Florentine is perhaps both the most instructive and the most interesting, for those who make art their leisure study. The Umbrian school, in which that of Siena became merged, cannot be considered historically separate from it, since the two were ever mingling and reacting on each other. The one is the great school of form and design—developed by the genius of the old Etruscan race, mingled with the vigour of the Northern nations; the other represents, so far as it has a separate existence as a school, the perfect type of spiritual beauty and religious feeling, preserved, when elsewhere it had passed away, in the quiet mountain country, where

* Intensely and accurately true. (ED.)

S. Francis had left the impression of his undying name. The central painter of this school is Fra Angelico ; the representative master of the other may be said to be Sandro Botticelli. All the beauty and the purity of disciplined Christian life, especially in monasticism, is set forth by Fra Angelico in the highest degree ever achieved ; and all the loveliness of domestic and social Christian life is set forth by Sandro Botticelli, combined with a high degree of knowledge and skill, which is more exquisitely balanced in subordination to spiritual teaching, than perhaps in any other painter. The Flemish school is of inferior rank. It arose under depressing circumstances, and unlovely surroundings. It hardly could have existed but for the influence of Catholicism, and is a notable instance of the power of religion to inspire and prolong a school of art, which without it would have had no inherent vitality. It appeals to no high qualities of imagination, but simply to devotional feeling. It was saved by its perfect reverence and purity of motive from the materialism to which German art always tended ; and its colour harmonies were exquisitely lovely.

The Venetian school, with its unapproachable power of colour, completes the perfection, and closes the age, of mediæval painting. The serious and

thoughtful character of the race preserved them long from the influences of pagan art ; and whilst Roman and Florentine art vanishes in imbecility, the last memorial of Venetian painting is also one of the best treasures of Christian art, the sweet Paradise of Tintoret.

PICTURES BY ARTISTS OF THE VENETIAN
SCHOOL IN ENGLISH GALLERIES.

GENTILE BELLINI.

Oxford University Gallery .. Two profile portraits of boys.
*Erroneously called Masaccio in
the Catalogue.*

Mr. Cheney Portrait of a Doge.

British Museum A chief and his wife.

Mr. Layard 1. Portrait of Mahomet. 2. Ori-
ental scene.

Late Sir C. Eastlake Virgin and Child.

GIOVANNI BELLINI.

National Gallery 1. Doge Loredano. 2. Virgin and
Child. 3. S. Jerome. *Very
doubtful.* 4. Christ in the
Garden. 5. S. Peter Martyr.
6. Death of S. Peter Martyr.

Hampton Court A portrait.

- Liverpool Institute* 1. Portrait of a youth. 2. Entombment of Christ. 3. Last Judgment.
- Alnwick Castle* Feast of the gods.
- Late Northwick Collection* .. Virgin and Child.
- Castle Howard* Presentation in the Temple.
- Mr. Fisher* A Crucifixion.
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- Hampton Court* Triumph of Julius Cæsar.
- Christ Church, Oxford* . . . Christ carrying His Cross.
- Hamilton Palace* 1, 2. Two monochromes.
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- Hampton Court* Nos. 45, 74, 252, 1086.
- National Gallery, Edinburgh* 1. Bust of a man. 2. A young man and girl.
- Christ Church, Oxford* Pan and satyrs.
- Dulwich Gallery* A musical party.
- Brunswick Gallery* A concert.
- Bath House* Herodias' daughter.
- Fitz-William Museum, Cambridge* } Adoration of the shepherds.
- Alnwick Castle* A group.

- Cobham Hall* Cæsar receiving Pompey's head.
Lord Elcho Virgin and Child.
Castle Howard Two heads.
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Late Northwick Collection . . 1. Cupid and young girl. 2. Bust
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Mr. Holford 1. Picture of women and a soldier.
2. Herodias' daughter.
Sir Humphrey de Trafford . . Woman of Samaria at the well.
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Mr. Barker The Three Ages.
Mr. Bennett Virgin and Child.

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Hampton Court 1. Expulsion of Heresy. 2. Por-
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Bridgewater House 1. Entombment. 2. Portrait.
Stafford House Pope and cardinals.
Late Sir C. Eastlake Portrait.
Lord Brownlow Doge Francesco Donati.
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Mr. Holford 1. Portrait of a procurator of S.
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- Wentworth Castle* Portrait of a monk. *Called a Holbein.*
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